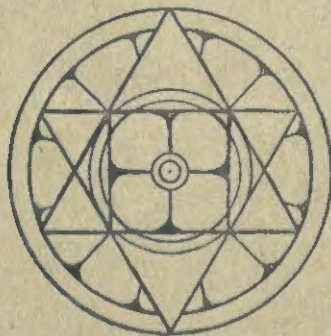


167
SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
CENTRE COLLECTION
VOL. I

SRI AUROBINDO ON HIMSELF
AND ON THE MOTHER

Sri Aurobindo



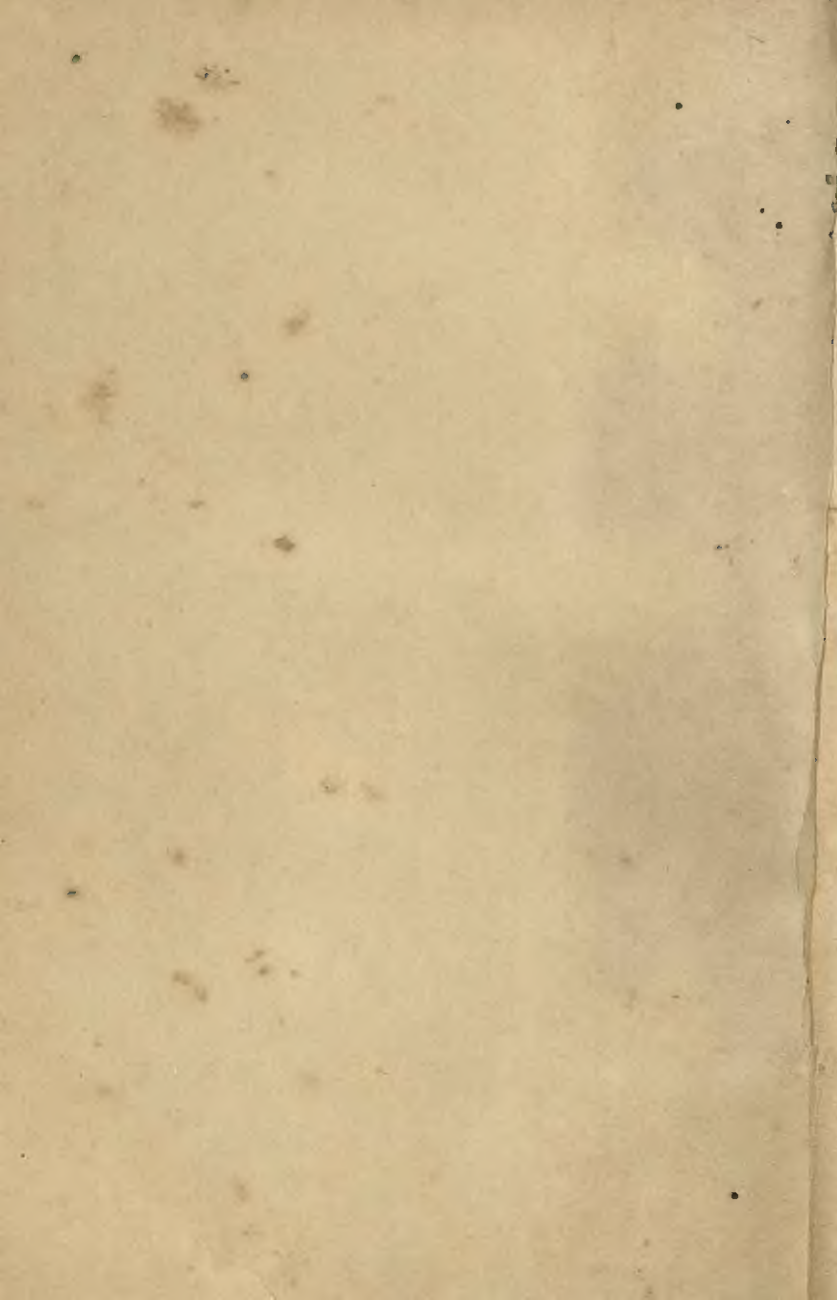
SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM
PONDICHERRY

707

~~707~~
~~708~~
~~709~~

P/B





SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
CENTRE COLLECTION
VOL. I

SRI AUROBINDO ON HIMSELF
AND ON THE MOTHER

Sri Aurobindo



SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM
PONDICHERRY
1953

Publishers :
SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY CENTRE
PONDICHERRY

First Published 1953

R. T. W. B. LIBRARY
19.4.95.
No... 8925

All rights reserved

Printed at :
Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press
Pondicherry

PRINTED IN INDIA

A628/52/8/5000

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Sri Aurobindo was very emphatic in stating that only he could write truly about himself; but he never wrote any comprehensive or systematic account of his life. Only in his correspondence with his disciples and others he sometimes explained points by incidentally referring to some event in his own life or some experience in his own Yogic development. Also on a few occasions he corrected misleading statements concerning him published in some journals and books and gave notes about some points in his life to three of his biographers who submitted their manuscripts to him for verification. All this material has been compiled and presented in a systematic arrangement in Part One of this book. This has been done with the specific intention of providing absolutely authentic information about Sri Aurobindo's life so as to leave no room for anyone to make doubtful or misleading statements about him. This has become particularly necessary in view of the fact that the few books and articles that have been published about him are, even when written by well-intentioned persons, often inaccurate in their facts and misguiding in their interpretations.

In some of the letters Sri Aurobindo has written jointly about himself and the Mother after she came to India and joined him in his spiritual work. These have been separately compiled and placed in Part Two of the book.

Part Three consists of Sri Aurobindo's letters in which he has answered the questions of his disciples and others about the Mother.

Some of the letters included in this book have already been published in the various books of Sri Aurobindo's letters, but most of them are being published for the first time. In some cases where the whole letter dealt with many topics only the portion dealing with him or the Mother has been extracted for inclusion in this book. Sometimes, in order to avoid a direct personal reference, Sri Aurobindo used to write about himself in the third person. This is the reason why at a few places in the book the reference to Sri Aurobindo is in the third person.

Some material about Sri Aurobindo and the Mother still remains to be compiled. It is hoped to make this available in the next edition of this book.

CONTENTS

PART ONE

Sri Aurobindo on Himself

Notes and Letters on His Life

			<i>Page</i>
I.	LIFE BEFORE PONDICHERY	7
	I. EARLY LIFE IN ENGLAND	9
	II. LIFE IN BARODA	20
	III. THE LEADER OF INDIAN NATIONALISM		38
	IV. CORRECTIONS OF WRONG STATEMENTS IN THE PRESS	92
II.	BEGINNINGS OF YOGA	121
III.	HIS PATH AND OTHER PATHS	147
IV.	SADHANA FOR THE EARTH-CONSCIOUSNESS	213
V.	THE MASTER AND THE GUIDE	249
VI.	THE POET AND THE CRITIC	288
VII.	REMINISCENCES AND OBSERVATIONS	309

CONTENTS

PART TWO

Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother

	<i>Page</i>
I. LEADERS OF EVOLUTION	355
II. IDENTITY OF THEIR CONSCIOUSNESS ...	361
III. DIFFICULTIES OF THE PATH-FINDERS ...	368
IV. HELPERS ON THE WAY	392

PART THREE

Sri Aurobindo on the Mother

I. WHO IS THE MOTHER	431
II. ASPECTS AND POWERS OF THE MOTHER ...	439
III. LIGHTS AND VISIONS OF THE MOTHER ...	456
IV. OPENING AND SURRENDER TO THE MOTHER ...	474
V. WORKING OF THE MOTHER'S FORCE ...	501
VI. THE MOTHER'S PRESENCE	537
VII. TRUE RELATION WITH THE MOTHER ...	548
VIII. THE MOTHER AND THE WORKING OF THE ASHRAM	596
IX. SADHANA THROUGH WORK FOR THE MOTHER	698
X. THE MOTHER'S HELP IN DIFFICULTIES ...	723
XI. EXPLANATIONS OF SOME VIEWS OF THE MOTHER ETC.	759
SOME EARLY LETTERS	773

SRI AUROBINDO ON HIMSELF
AND ON THE MOTHER



It matters not if there are hundreds of beings plunged in the densest ignorance. He whom we saw yesterday is on earth: His presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into light, when Thy reign shall be indeed established upon earth.

30-3-1914







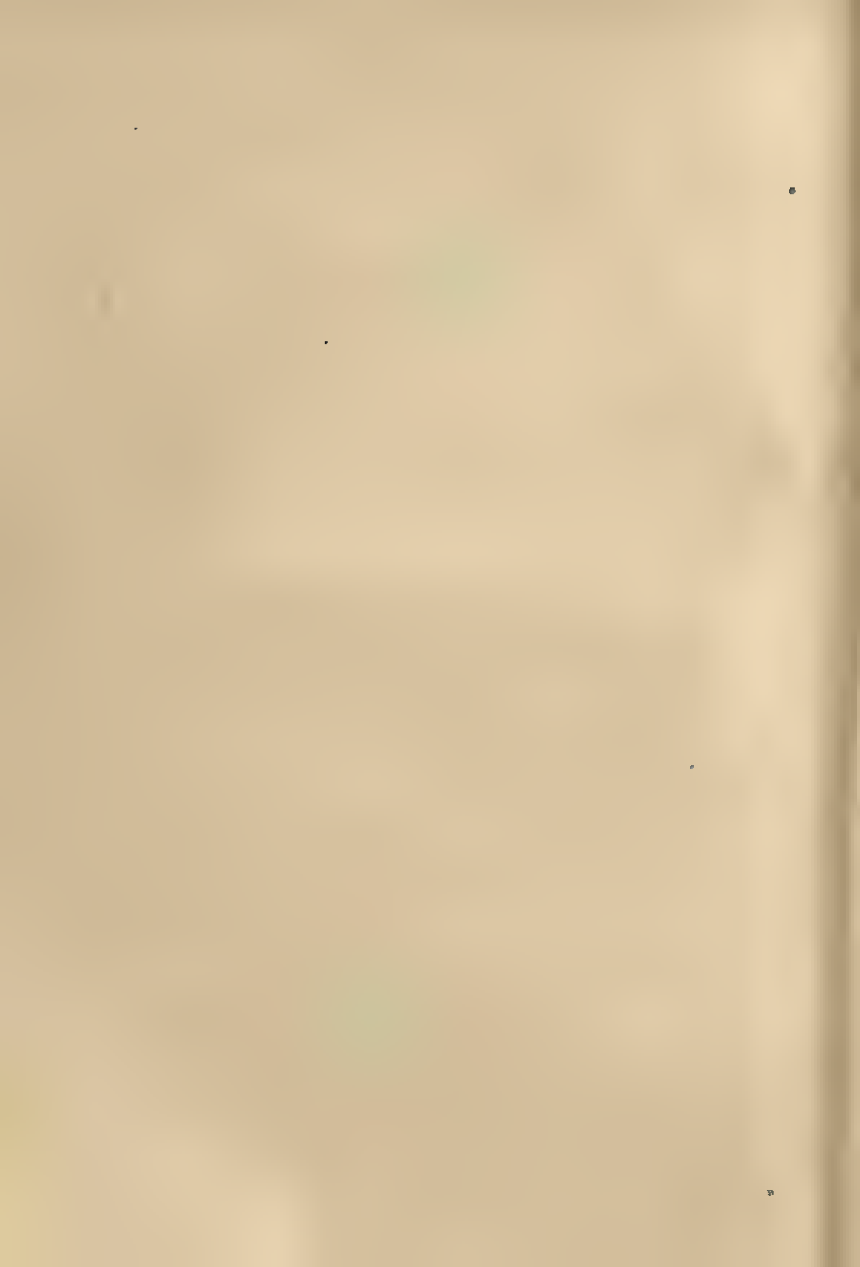
It would be only myself who could speak of things in my past giving them their true form and significance.



Neither you nor anyone else knows anything at all of my life; it has not been on the surface for men to see.

Sri Anubodo





Part One

Sri Aurobindo on Himself

Notes and Letters on His Life



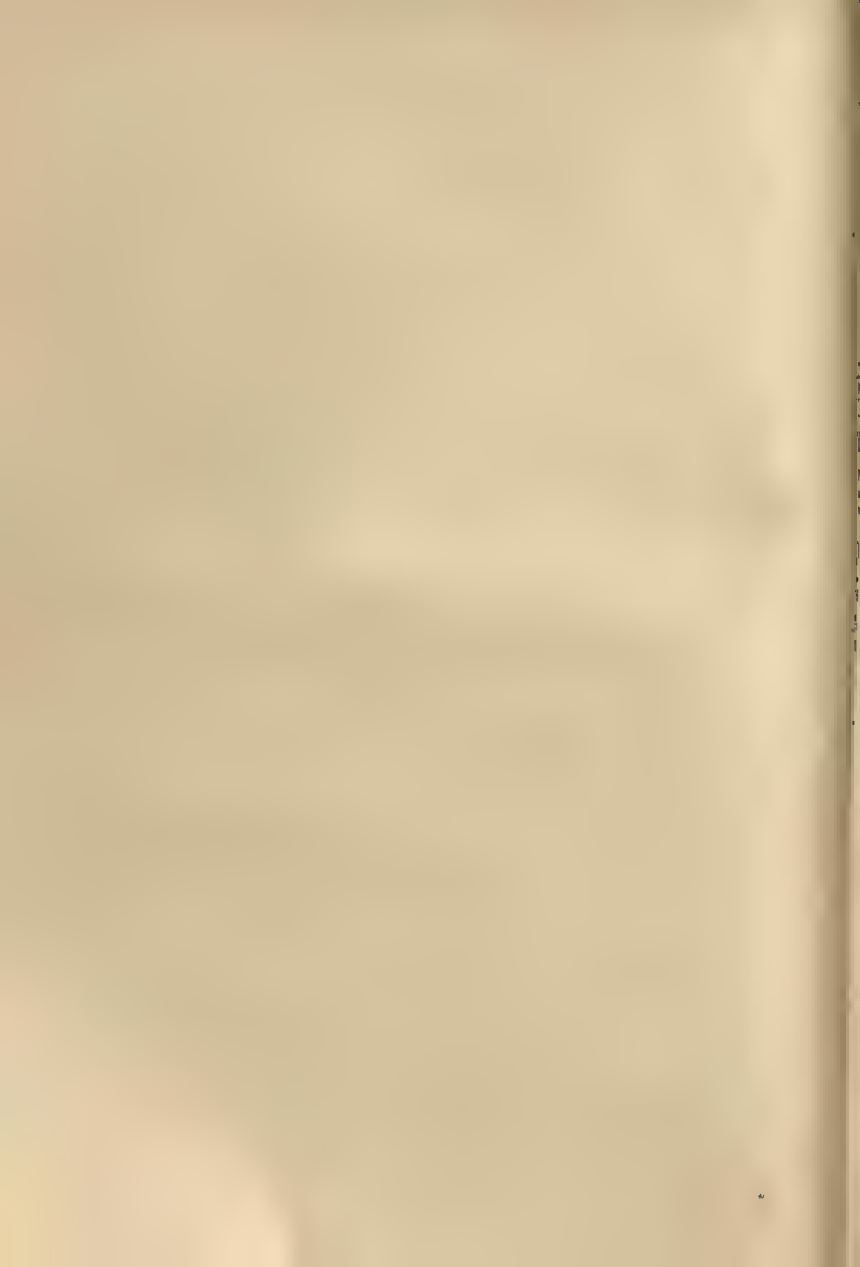
I

LIFE BEFORE PONDICHERRY

This section is compiled from notes given by Sri Aurobindo during 1943-46 while reading the manuscripts of his three biographers submitted to him for correction or verification and approval. The notes were intended either to elucidate their statements by supplying the relevant facts or to correct and modify them wherever necessary.

Brief references to the points in the original uncorrected manuscripts or to incomplete or erroneous statements in them are given in parenthesis in italics preceding Sri Aurobindo's comments on them.

A few marginal notes written by Sri Aurobindo on his biography by a Maharashtrian author are also included here, as also notes and letters dictated by him to correct misleading or fabricated statements concerning him published in some journals and in a book.



I. EARLY LIFE IN ENGLAND

AUROBINDO was born on August 15th, 1872, in Calcutta. His father, a man of great ability and strong personality, had been among the first to go to England for his education. He returned entirely anglicised in habits, ideas and ideals,—so strongly that his Aurobindo as a child spoke English and Hindustani only and learned his mother-tongue only after his return from England. He was determined that his children should receive an entirely European upbringing. While in India they were sent for the beginning of their education to an Irish nuns' school in Darjeeling and in 1879 he took his three sons to England and placed them with an English clergyman and his wife with strict instructions that they should not be allowed to make the acquaintance of any Indian or undergo any Indian influence. These instructions were carried out to the letter and Aurobindo grew up in entire ignorance of India, her people, her religion and her culture.

Sri Aurobindo never went to Manchester Grammar School. His two brothers studied there, but he himself was educated privately by Mr. and Mrs. Drewett. Drewett was an accomplished Latin scholar; he did not teach him Greek, but grounded him so well in Latin that the headmaster of St. Paul's school in London took up Aurobindo himself to ground him in Greek and then pushed him rapidly into the higher classes of the school.

Austen Leigh was not Provost at that time; the Provost's name was Prothero.

Aurobindo gave his attention to the classics at Manchester and at Saint Paul's; but even at St. Paul's in the last three years he simply went through his school course and spent most of his spare time in general reading, especially English poetry, literature and fiction, French literature and the history of ancient, mediaeval and modern Europe. He spent some time also over learning Italian, some German and a little Spanish. He spent much time too in writing poetry. The school studies during this period engaged very little of his time; he was already at ease in them and did not think it necessary to labour over them any longer. All the same he was able to win all the prizes in King's College in one year for Greek and Latin verse, etc.

He did not graduate at Cambridge. He passed

high in the First Part of the Tripos (first class); it is on passing this First Part that the degree of B.A. is usually given; but as he had only two years at his disposal, he had to pass it in his second year at Cambridge; and the First Part gives the degree only if it is taken in the third year; if one takes it in the second year one has to appear for the Second Part of the Tripos in the fourth year to qualify for the degree. He might have got the degree if he had made an application for it, but he did not care to do so. A degree in English is valuable only if one wants to take up an academical career.

St. Paul's was a day school. The three brothers lived in London for some time with the mother of Mr. Drewett, but she left them after a quarrel between her and Manmohan about religion. The old Mrs. Drewett was fervently Evangelical and she said she would not live with an atheist as the house might fall down on her. Afterwards Benoybhusan and Aurobindo occupied a room in the South Kensington Liberal Club where Mr. J. S. Cotton, brother of Sir Henry Cotton, for some time Lt. Governor of Bengal, was the secretary and Benoy assisted him in his work. Manmohan went into lodgings. This was the time of the greatest suffering and poverty. Subsequently Aurobindo also went

separately into lodgings until he took up residence at Cambridge.

HARDSHIPS DURING SCHOOL LIFE IN LONDON

During a whole year a slice or two of sandwich, bread and butter and a cup of tea in the morning and in the evening a penny saveloy formed the only food.

FAILURE TO APPEAR FOR THE RIDING TEST IN THE I. C. S. EXAMINATION

Nothing detained him in his room. He felt no call for the I.C.S. and was seeking some way to escape from that bondage. By certain manœuvres he managed to get himself disqualified for riding without himself rejecting the Service, which his family would not have allowed him to do.

(Aurobindo, before he was twenty years old, had mastered Greek and Latin and English and had also acquired sufficient familiarity with continental languages like German, French and Italian.)

This should be corrected as: ".....mastered Greek and Latin, English and French and had also acquired some familiarity with continental languages like German and Italian."

(In England at an early age he took the firm decision of liberating his own nation.)

Not quite that; at this age Aurobindo began first to be interested in Indian politics of which previously he knew nothing. His father began sending *The Bengalee* newspaper with passages marked relating cases of maltreatment of Indians by Englishmen and he wrote in his letters denouncing the British Government in India as a heartless Government. At the age of eleven Aurobindo had already received strongly the impression that a period of general upheaval and great revolutionary changes was coming in the world and he himself was destined to play a part in it. His attention was now drawn to India and this feeling was soon canalised into the idea of the liberation of his own country. But the "firm decision" took full shape only towards the end of another four years. It had already been made when he went to Cambridge and as a member and for some time secretary of the Indian Majlis at Cambridge he delivered many revolutionary speeches which, as he afterwards learnt, had their part in determining the authorities to exclude him from the Indian Civil Service; the failure in the riding test was only the occasion, for in some other cases an opportunity was given for remedying this defect in India itself.

(Young Aurobindo formed the secret society—"Lotus and Dagger"—while in England.)

This is not correct. The Indian students in London did once meet to form a secret society called romantically the "Lotus and Dagger" in which each member vowed to work for the liberation of India generally and to take some special work in furtherance of that end. Aurobindo did not form the society, but he became a member along with his brothers. But the society was still-born. This happened immediately before the return to India and when he had finally left Cambridge. Indian politics at that time was timid and moderate and this was the first attempt of the kind by Indian students in England. In India itself Aurobindo's maternal grandfather Raj Narayan Bose formed once a secret society—of which Tagore, then a very young man, became a member, and also set up an institution for national and revolutionary propaganda, but this finally came to nothing. Later on there was a revolutionary spirit in Maharashtra and a secret society was started in Western India with a Rajput noble as the head and this had a Council of Five in Bombay with several prominent Maharatta politicians as its members. This society was contacted and joined by Aurobindo somewhere in 1902-3, sometime after he had already started secret revolu-

tionary work in Bengal on his own account. In Bengal he found some very small secret societies recently started and acting separately without any clear direction and tried to unite them with a common programme. The union was never complete and did not last, but the movement itself grew and very soon received an enormous extension and became a formidable factor in the general unrest in Bengal.

(While in London he used to attend the weekly meetings of the Fabian Society.)

Never once.

(Young Aurobindo was sensitive to beauty in man and Nature....He watched with pain the thousand and one instances of man's cruelty to man.)

The feeling was more abhorrence than pain; from early childhood there was a strong hatred and disgust for all kinds of cruelty and oppression, but the term 'pain' would not accurately describe the reaction.

(He may have known a smattering of Bengali till he was five years of age. Thereafter till twenty-one he spoke only English.)

In my father's house only English and Hindustani were spoken. I knew no Bengali.

(In much of Aurobindo's early English verse written between his eighteenth and twentieth years in England, included in "Songs to Myrtilla", the derivative element is prominent. Not only are names and lineaments and allusions foreign in their garb, but the literary echoes are many and drawn from varied sources.)

Foreign to what? He knew nothing about India or her culture, etc. What these poems express is the education and imaginations and ideas and feelings created by a purely European culture and surroundings—it could not be otherwise. In the same way the poems on Indian subjects and surroundings in the same book express the first reactions to India and Indian culture after the return home and a first acquaintance with these things.

(Like Macaulay's "A Jacobite's Epitaph", Sri Aurobindo's "Hic Jacet" also achieves its severe beauty through sheer economy of words; the theme, the very rhythm and language of the poem, all hark back to Macaulay.)

If so, it must have been an unconscious influence; for after early childhood Macaulay's verse (*The Lays*) ceased to appeal. The *Jacobite's Epitaph* was perhaps not even read twice; it made no impression.

(Sir Henry Cotton was much connected with Maharshi Rajnarayan Bose—Sri Aurobindo's maternal grandfather. His son James Cotton was at this time in London. As a result of these favourable circumstances a meeting came about with the Gaekwar of Baroda.)

Cotton was my father's friend—they had made arrangements for my posting in Bengal; but he had nothing to do with my meeting with the Gaekwar. James Cotton was well acquainted with my elder brother, because he was Secretary of the South Kensington Liberal Club where we were living and my brother was his assistant. He took great interest in us. It was he who arranged the meeting.

(For fourteen years young Aurobindo had lived in England divorced from the culture of his own nation and was not happy with himself. He longed to begin all again from the beginning and to try to re-nationalise himself.)

There was no unhappiness for that reason, nor

at that time any deliberate will for re-nationalisation—which came, after reaching India, by natural attraction to Indian culture and ways of life and a temperamental feeling and preference for all that was Indian.

(He was leaving, he wished to leave, and yet there was a touch of regret as well at the thought of leaving England. He felt the flutter of unutterable misgivings and regrets; he achieved escape from them by having recourse to poetic expression.)

There was no such regret in leaving England, no attachment to the past or misgivings for the future. Few friendships were made in England and none very intimate; the mental atmosphere was not found congenial. There was therefore no need for any such escape.

(Aurobindo was going back to India to serve under the Gaekwar of Baroda; he cast one last look at his all but adopted country and uttered his parting words in "Envoi".)

No, the statement was of a transition from one culture to another. There was an attachment to English and European thought and literature, but

not to England as a country; he had no ties there and did not make England his adopted country, as Manmohan did for a time. If there was attachment to a European land as a second country, it was intellectually and emotionally to one not seen or lived in in this life, not England, but France.

THE USE OF "ACROYD" IN HIS NAME—

A. A. GHOSE—IN ENGLAND

Sri Aurobindo dropped the "Acroyd" from his name before he left England and never used it again.

(Death of Sri Aurobindo's father due to false report of his son's death.)

There was no question of the two other brothers starting from England. It was only Aurobindo's death that was reported and it was while uttering his name in lamentation that the father died.

(After his father's demise the responsibility of supporting the family devolved on him and he had to take up some appointment soon.)

There was no question of supporting the family at that time. That happened some time after going to India.

II. LIFE IN BARODA

APPOINTMENTS IN BARODA STATE

(I)

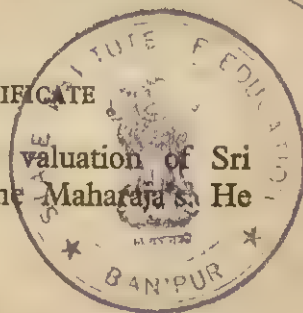
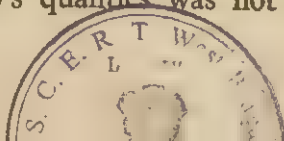
He was first put in the Land Settlement Department, for a short time in the Stamps Office, then in the Central Revenue Office and in the Secretariat. Afterwards without joining the College and while doing other work he was lecturer in French at the College and finally at his own request was appointed there as Professor of English. All through, the Maharaja used to call him whenever something had to be written which needed careful wording; he also employed him to prepare some of his public speeches and in other work of a literary or educational character. Afterwards Sri Aurobindo became the Vice-Principal of the College and was for some time acting Principal. Most of the personal work for the Maharaja was done in an unofficial capacity; he was usually invited to breakfast with the Maharaja at the Palace and stayed on to do this work.

(2)

Sri Aurobindo was never appointed to the post of Private Secretary. He was put first in the Settlement Department, not as an officer but to learn the work, then in the Stamps and Revenue departments; he was for some time put to work in the Secretariat for drawing up dispatches, etc. Finally, he oscillated towards the College and entered it at first as part time lecturer in French, afterwards as a regular Professor teaching English and was finally appointed Vice-Principal. Meanwhile, whenever he thought fit, the Maharaja would send for him for writing letters, composing speeches or drawing up documents of various kinds which needed special care in the phrasing of the language. All this was quite informal; there was no appointment as Private Secretary. Once the Maharaja took Sri Aurobindo as Secretary in his Kashmir tour, but there was much friction between them during the tour and the experiment was not repeated.

THE MAHARAJA'S CERTIFICATE

"Diligent, serious, etc."—this valuation of Sri Aurobindo's qualities was not the Maharaja's. He



gave him a certificate for ability and intelligence but also for lack of punctuality and regularity. If instead of "diligent and serious" and "a career of meritorious service" it were said that he was brilliant and quick and efficient in work, it would be more accurate. The description, as it is, gives an incorrect picture.

(The authorities objected to his patriotic activities.)

Is the reference to the Baroda authorities?

Sri Aurobindo is not aware that his utterances or writings were ever objected to by them. His articles in the *Indu Prakash* were anonymous, although many people in Bombay knew that he was the writer. Otherwise, except for a few speeches at functions in the Palace itself such as the reception of Dr. S.K. Mullick which had nothing to do with politics, he spoke mainly as Chairman of the Baroda College Union; there was no objection made at any time and he continued to preside over some of these debates until he left Baroda. It was in England while at Cambridge that he made revolutionary speeches at the meetings of the Indian Majlis which were recorded as a black mark against him by the India Office.

(When he arrived in India, Sri Aurobindo knew no Indian language except a smattering of Bengali which was one of the subjects he had to study for the I.C.S.)

Bengali was not a subject for the competitive examination for the I.C.S. It was after he had passed the competitive examination that Sri Aurobindo as a probationer who had chosen Bengal as his province began to learn Bengali. The course of study provided was a very poor one; his teacher, a retired English Judge from Bengal was not very competent, but what was learnt was more than a few words. Sri Aurobindo for the most part learnt Bengali for himself afterwards in Baroda.

STUDY OF BENGALI IN BARODA

About the learning of Bengali, it may be said that before engaging the teacher, Sri Aurobindo already knew enough of the language to appreciate the novels of Bankim and the poetry of Madhusudan. He learned enough afterwards to write himself and to conduct a weekly in Bengali, writing most of the articles himself, but his mastery over the language was not at all the same as over English and he did not venture to make speeches in his mother tongue.

(Sri Aurobindo had regular lessons in Bengali from Dinendra Kumar Roy at Baroda.)

No, there were no regular lessons. Dinendra lived with Sri Aurobindo as a companion and his work was rather to help him to correct and perfect his knowledge of the language and to accustom him to conversation in Bengali than any regular teaching.

Sri Aurobindo was not a pupil of Dinendra Kumar; he had learnt Bengali already by himself and only called in Dinendra to help him in his studies.

(In Baroda, Sri Aurobindo engaged pundits and started mastering both Bengali and Sanskrit.)

A teacher was engaged for Bengali, a young Bengali *litterateur*—none for Sanskrit.

(He studied Hindi also at Baroda.)

Sri Aurobindo never studied Hindi; but his acquaintance with Sanskrit and other Indian languages made it easy for him to pick up Hindi without any regular study and to understand it when he read Hindi books or newspapers. He did not learn Sanskrit through Bengali, but direct in Sanskrit itself or through English.

(In Baroda after making a comparative study of all literatures, history, etc., he began to realise the importance of the Veda.)

No. Started study of Veda at Pondicherry.

(In 1895 were published, for circulation among friends only, his poems, five of which were written in England and the rest at Baroda.)

It is the other way round; all the poems in the book (*Songs to Myrtilla*) were written in England except five later ones which were written after his return to India.

(It is not unlikely that "Baji Prabhou" and "Vidula"—two of the longer poems that belong to Sri Aurobindo's early period—had been actually written, or at least mentally sketched, during his last years in Baroda.)

No, these poems were conceived and written in Bengal during the time of political activity.

(Sri Aurobindo was preoccupied, even when he was but a conscientious teacher or an accomplished poet...with the problem of service and of sacrifice....

From the very first the idea of personal salvation or of individual felicity was utterly repugnant to him.)

“Utterly repugnant”—this is a little too strong. It was rather that it did not seem anything like a supreme aim or worth being pursued for its own sake; a solitary salvation leaving the world to its fate was felt as almost distasteful.

(While engaged in Baroda State Service Sri Aurobindo began to think incessantly if some opportunity could not be found for service in the larger life of Bengal, of the Indian nation itself.)

He had already in England decided to devote his life to the service of his country and its liberation. He even began soon after coming to India to write on political matters (without giving his name) in the daily press, trying to awaken the nation to the ideas of the future. But those were not well received by the leaders of the time, they succeeded in preventing further publication and he drew back into silence. But he did not abandon either his ideas or his hope of an effective action.

THE ARTICLES IN THE “INDU PRAKASH”

The facts about the articles in the *Indu Prakash*

were these. They were begun at the instance of K. G. Deshpande, Aurobindo's Cambridge friend who was editor of the paper, but the first two articles made a sensation and frightened Ranade and other Congress leaders. Ranade warned the proprietor of the paper that, if this went on, he would surely be prosecuted for sedition. Accordingly the original plan of the series had to be dropped at the proprietor's instance. Deshpande requested Sri Aurobindo to continue in a modified tone and he reluctantly consented, but felt no farther interest and the articles were published at long intervals and finally dropped of themselves altogether.

(The series of articles he wrote in the "Indu Prakash" were on Indian civilisation, entitled: "New Lamps for Old".)

This title did not refer to Indian civilisation but to Congress politics. It is not used in the sense of the Aladdin story, but was intended to imply the offering of new lights to replace the old and faint reformist lights of the Congress.

(He sent some of his friends, at Baroda and Bombay, to Bengal to prepare for the revolutionary movement.)

It was not any of his friends at Baroda and in Bombay who went to Bengal on his behalf. His first emissary was a young Bengali who had by the help of Sri Aurobindo's friends in the Baroda Army enlisted as trooper in the cavalry regiment in spite of the prohibition by the British Government of the enlistment of any Bengali in any army in India. This man who was exceedingly energetic and capable, formed a first group in Calcutta which grew rapidly (afterwards many branches were established); he also entered into relations with P. Mitter and other revolutionaries already at work in the province. He was joined afterwards by Barin who had in the interval come to Baroda.

(At this time there was at Bombay a secret society headed by a Rajput prince of Udaipur.)

This Rajput leader was not a prince, that is to say, a Ruling Chief but a noble of the Udaipur State with the title of Thakur. The Thakur was not a member of the Council in Bombay; he stood above it as the leader of the whole movement while the Council helped him to organise Maharashtra and the Mahratta States. He himself worked principally upon the Indian Army of which he had already won over two or three regiments. Sri Aurobindo took a

special journey into Central India to meet and speak with Indian sub-officers and men of one of these regiments.

(During his stay at Baroda Sri Aurobindo got into touch with men that counted, groups that counted. He went to Bengal "to see what was the hope of revival, what was the political condition of the people, and whether there was the possibility of a real movement".)

It might be added that he had begun a work that was still nameless; and it was in the course of that work that he went to Bengal "to see what was the hope of revival, etc."

(Since 1900 Sri Aurobindo wished to enter the political fray and to contribute his mite to the forces that were seriously working for India's redemption and rehabilitation. He held private talks, he corresponded, he put pressure on front-rank leaders; but as yet he could do little.)

This does not give a correct idea. He had already joined with some of the more advanced leaders to

organise bodies for political action which would act when the time for action came;¹ it was only in public as yet that he could do little.

(Even his own intrepid province of Bengal was in no mood to be persuaded by him and his gospel of virile nationalism.)

It was anything but intrepid at the time; it was the *mantra* of Bande Mataram and the leap into revolutionary action that changed the people of the province.

(He found that in Bengal "the prevailing mood was apathy and despair". There was no other go except to bide his time.)

¹ The programme of this organisation was at first Swaraj, Swadeshi, Boycott—Swaraj meaning to it complete independence. The word Swaraj was first used by the Bengali-Maratha publicist, Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar, writer of *DesherKatha*, a book compiling all the details of India's economic servitude which had an enormous influence on the young men of Bengal and helped to turn them into revolutionaries. The word was taken up as their ideal by the revolutionary party and popularised by the vernacular paper *Sandhya* edited by Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya; it was caught hold of by Dadabhai Naoroji at the Calcutta Congress as the equivalent of colonial self-government but did not long retain that depreciated value. Sri Aurobindo was the first to use its English equivalent "independence" and reiterate it constantly in the *Bande Mataram* as the one and immediate aim of national politics.

It should be added, "and to continue his political work behind the scenes in silence. The moment for public work had not yet come". (Once his work was started he continued it until circumstances made it possible to join in a public movement.)

(While in Baroda State Service he visited from time to time his grandfather in Bengal. His visits were for political purposes.)

This is not correct. In these visits he was not concerned with politics. It was some years afterwards that he made a journey along with Devabrata Bose, Barin's co-adjutant in the *Yugantar*, partly to visit some of the revolutionary centres already formed, but also to meet leading men in the districts and find out the general attitude of the country and the possibilities of the revolutionary movement. His experience in this journey persuaded him that secret action or preparation by itself was not likely to be effective if there were not also a wide public movement which would create a universal patriotic fervour and popularise the idea of independence as the ideal and aim of Indian politics. It was this conviction that determined his later action.

(Among the leading lights of the day was P. Mitter who was an out-and-out man of action.)

P. Mitter had a spiritual life and aspiration and a strong religious feeling; he was like Bepin Pal and several other prominent leaders of the new nationalist movement in Bengal, a disciple of the famous Yogi Bejoy Goswami, but he did not bring these things into his politics.

(Sri Aurobindo was influenced by the patriotic fervour of Swami Vivekananda's utterances.)

Sri Aurobindo was not aware of this speech or of any political action by Vivekananda. He had only heard casually of Vivekananda's intense patriotic feelings which inspired Sister Nivedita.

(Allan Hume had founded the Indian National Congress to act as an intermediary for bringing together the elite of the English and the Indian peoples to promote discussions, reforms, etc.)

This description of the Congress as an intermediary, etc., would hardly have been recognised or admitted by the Congress itself at that time. The

British Government also would not have recognised it. It regarded the institution with dislike and ignored it as much as possible. Also, Sri Aurobindo was totally opposed to making any approach on behalf of the nation to the British Government; he regarded the Congress policy as a process of futile petition and protest and considered self-help non-cooperation and organisation of all forces in the nation for revolutionary action as the sole effective policy.

(Sri Aurobindo did not believe in, nor did he like, violent revolution.)

This is incorrect. If Sri Aurobindo had not believed in the efficacy of violent revolution or had disliked it, he would not have joined the secret society whose purpose was to prepare a national insurrection. His historical studies had not taught him the lesson indicated here. On the contrary, he had studied with interest the revolutions and rebellions which led to national liberation, the struggle against the English in mediaeval France and the revolts which liberated America and Italy. He took much of his inspiration from these movements and their leaders, especially, Jeanne d'Arc and Mazzini. In his public activity he took up non-

cooperation and passive resistance as a means in the struggle for independence but not the sole means and as long as he was in Bengal he maintained a secret revolutionary activity as a preparation for open revolt, in case passive resistance proved insufficient for the purpose.

SWADESHI, PARNELLISM AND SINN FEIN MOVEMENT

Sri Aurobindo's policy in India was not based on Parnellism. It had more resemblance to Sinn Fein but was conceived before the Sinn Fein movement and was therefore not inspired by it.

(Sri Aurobindo had acquired a measure of intellectual pre-eminence as a result of his stay in England; but that was not enough, and he was certainly not happy. His deeper perplexities remained; he did not know what exactly he should do to make himself useful to his countrymen or how he should set about doing it. He turned to Yoga so that he might be enabled to clarify his own floating ideas and impulses and also, if possible, perfect the hidden instrument within.)

There was no unhappiness. "Perplexities" also is too strong. Sri Aurobindo's habit in action was not to devise beforehand and plan but to keep a

fixed purpose, watch events, prepare forces and act when he felt it to be the right moment. His first organised work in politics (grouping people who accepted the idea of independence and were prepared to take up an appropriate action) was undertaken at an early age, but took a regular shape in or about 1902; two years later he began his practice of Yoga—not to clarify his ideas, but to find the spiritual strength which would support him and enlighten his way.

(He met Brahmananda on the banks of the Narmada for advice on national education activity.)

Sri Aurobindo saw Brahmananda long before there was any question of national education activities. Brahmananda never gave him any counsel or advice nor was there any conversation between them; Sri Aurobindo went to his monastery only for *darshan* and blessings. Barin had a close connection with Ganganath and his Guru was one of the Sannyasis who surrounded Brahmananda, but the connection with Ganganath was spiritual only.

(On commencing his silent Yoga at Pondicherry Sri Aurobindo presently outgrew the instructions that had been given to him by Lele and his predecessors.)

That was done long before the sojourn in Pondicherry. There were no predecessors. Sri Aurobindo had some connection with a member of the governing body of the Naga Sannyasis who gave him a *mantra* of Kali (or rather a *stotra*) and conducted certain *kriyas* and a Vedic *yajna*, but all this was for political success in his mission and not for Yoga.

(During the Baroda period Sri Aurobindo met, one by one, Sri Hamsa Swarup Swami, Sri Sadguru Brahmananda and Sri Madhavdas....He had even exchanged spiritual pulses with his first gurus.)

He had momentary contacts with Brahmananda, but as a great Yogin, not as a Guru—only *darshan* and blessings. There was no contact with the others.

(Aravinda Babu used to attend the lectures of the Swami—Paramahansa Maharaj Indraswarup—with much interest...personally met him and learnt about asanas and pranayam.)

Only heard his lecture at the Gaekwar's Palace, did not go to see him, did not practise pranayam till long afterwards.

(He met the saint Madhavdas at Malsar on the banks of the Narmada and learnt about Yoga-asanas.)

Visited, probably with Deshpande, one or two places on the banks of the Narmada, but no recollection of Malsar or Madhavdas, certainly no effect of the meeting, if it happened at all.

(Thus it may be said that Aravinda Babu started taking interest in Yoga from 1898-99.)

No. I did not start Yoga till about 1904.

(Such guidance as he received from his earliest gurus and such partial realisation as he was then able to achieve only reinforced his faith in Yoga as the sole cure for his own "rooted sorrow" and for the manifold ills of humanity.)

Interrogation mark against the word "gurus".

There was no resort to Yoga as a cure for sorrow; there was no sorrow to cure. He had always in him a considerable equanimity in his nature in face of the world and its difficulties, and after some inward depression in his adolescence (not due to any outward circumstances, and not amounting to sorrow or melancholy, for it was only a strain in the temperament), this became fairly settled.

III. THE LEADER OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

A GENERAL NOTE ON SRI AUROBINDO'S POLITICAL LIFE

There were three sides to Sri Aurobindo's political ideas and activities. First, there was the action with which he started, a secret revolutionary propaganda and organisation of which the central object was the preparation of an armed insurrection. Secondly, there was a public propaganda intended to convert the whole nation to the ideal of independence which was regarded, when he entered into politics, by the vast majority of Indians as unpractical and impossible, an almost insane chimera. It was thought that the British Empire was too powerful and India too weak, effectively disarmed and impotent even to dream of the success of such an endeavour. Thirdly, there was the organisation of the people to carry on a public and united opposition and undermining of the foreign rule through an increasing non-cooperation and passive resistance.

At that time the military organisation of the great

empires and their means of military action were not so overwhelming and apparently irresistible as they now are: the rifle was still the decisive weapon, air power had not yet been developed and the force of artillery was not so devastating as it afterwards became. India was disarmed, but Sri Aurobindo thought that with proper organisation and help from outside this difficulty might be overcome and in so vast a country as India and with the smallness of the regular British armies, even a guerrilla warfare accompanied by general resistance and revolt might be effective. There was also the possibility of a general revolt in the Indian army. At the same time he had studied the temperament and characteristics of the British people and the turn of their political instincts, and he believed that although they would resist any attempt at self-liberation by the Indian people and would at the most only concede very slowly such reforms as would not weaken their imperial control, still they were not of the kind which would be ruthlessly adamant to the end: if they found resistance and revolt becoming general and persistent they would in the end try to arrive at an accommodation to save what they could of their empire or in an extremity prefer to grant independence rather than have it forcefully wrested from their hands.

In some quarters there is the idea that Sri Aurobindo's political standpoint was entirely pacifist, that he was opposed in principle and in practice to all violence and that he denounced terrorism, insurrection, etc., as entirely forbidden by the spirit and letter of the Hindu religion. It is even suggested that he was a forerunner of the gospel of Ahimsa. This is quite incorrect. Sri Aurobindo is neither an impotent moralist nor a weak pacifist.

The rule of confining political action to passive resistance was adopted as the best policy for the National Movement at that stage and not as a part of a gospel of Non-violence or pacific idealism. Peace is a part of the highest ideal, but it must be spiritual or at the very least psychological in its basis; without a change in human nature it cannot come with any finality. If it is attempted on any other basis (moral principle or gospel of Ahimsa or any other), it will fail and even may leave things worse than before. He is in favour of an attempt to put down war by international agreement and international force, what is now contemplated in the "New Order", if that proves possible, but that would not be Ahimsa, it would be a putting down of anarchic force by legal force and even then one cannot be sure that it would be permanent. Within nations this sort of peace has been secured, but

it does not prevent occasional civil wars and revolutions and political outbreaks and repressions, sometimes of a sanguinary character. The same might happen to a similar world-peace. Sri Aurobindo has never concealed his opinion that a nation is entitled to attain its freedom by violence, if it can do so or if there is no other way; whether it should do so or not, depends on what is the best policy, not on ethical considerations. Sri Aurobindo's position and practice in this matter was the same as Tilak's and that of other Nationalist leaders who were by no means Pacifists or worshippers of Ahimsa.

For the first few years in India, Sri Aurobindo abstained from any political activity (except the writing of the articles in the *Indu Prakash*) and studied the conditions in the country so that he might be able to judge more maturely what could be done. Then he made his first move when he sent a young Bengali soldier of the Baroda army, Jatin Banerji, as his lieutenant to Bengal with a programme of preparation and action which he thought might occupy a period of 30 years before fruition could become possible. As a matter of fact it has taken 50 years for the movement of liberation to arrive at fruition and the beginning of complete success. The idea was to establish secretly or, as

far as visible action could be taken, under various pretexts and covers, revolutionary propaganda and recruiting throughout Bengal. This was to be done among the youth of the country while sympathy and support and financial and other assistance were to be obtained from the older men who had advanced views or could be won over to them. Centres were to be established in every town and eventually in every village. Societies of young men were to be established with various ostensible objects, cultural, intellectual or moral and those already existing were to be won over for revolutionary use. Young men were to be trained in activities which might be helpful for ultimate military action, such as riding, physical training, athletics of various kinds, drill and organised movement. As soon as the idea was sown it attained a rapid prosperity; already existing small groups and associations of young men who had not yet the clear idea or any settled programme of revolution began to turn in this direction and a few who had already the revolutionary aim were contacted and soon developed activity on organised lines; the few rapidly became many. Meanwhile Sri Aurobindo had met a member of the Secret Society in Western India, and taken the oath of the Society and had been introduced to the Council in Bombay. His future action was not pursued

under any directions by this Council, but he took up on his own responsibility the task of generalising support for its objects in Bengal where as yet it had no membership or following. He spoke of the Society and its aim to P. Mitter and other leading men of the revolutionary group in Bengal and they took the oath of the Society and agreed to carry out its objects on the lines suggested by Sri Aurobindo. The special cover used by Mitter's group was association for lathi play which had already been popularised to some extent by Sarala Ghosal in Bengal among the young men; but other groups used other ostensible covers. Sri Aurobindo's attempt at a close organisation of the whole movement did not succeed, but the movement itself did not suffer by that, for the general idea was taken up and activity of many separate groups led to a greater and more widespread diffusion of the revolutionary drive and its action. Afterwards there came the partition of Bengal and a general outburst of revolt which favoured the rise of the extremist party and the great nationalist movement. Sri Aurobindo's activities were then turned more and more in this direction and the secret action became a secondary and subordinate element. He took advantage, however, of the Swadeshi movement to popularise the idea of violent

revolt in the future. At Barin's suggestion he agreed to the starting of a paper, *Yugantar*, which was to preach open revolt and the absolute denial of the British rule and include such items as a series of articles containing instructions for guerrilla warfare. Sri Aurobindo himself wrote some of the opening articles in the early numbers and he always exercised a general control; when a member of the sub-editorial staff, Swami Vivekananda's brother, presented himself on his own motion to the police in a search as the editor of the paper and was prosecuted, the *Yugantar* under Sri Aurobindo's orders adopted the policy of refusing to defend itself in a British Court on the ground that it did not recognise the foreign Government and this immensely increased the prestige and influence of the paper. It had as its chief writers and directors three of the ablest younger writers in Bengal, and it at once acquired an immense influence throughout Bengal. It may be noted that the Secret Society did not include terrorism in its programme, but this element grew up in Bengal as a result of the strong repression and the reaction to it in that Province.

The public activity of Sri Aurobindo began with the writing of the articles in the *Indu Prakash*. These seven articles written at the instance of K.G. Deshpande, editor of the paper and Sri Aurobindo's

Cambridge friend, under the caption 'New Lamps for Old' vehemently denounced the then Congress policy of pray, petition and protest and called for a dynamic leadership based upon self-help and fearlessness. But this outspoken and irrefutable criticism was checked by the action of a Moderate leader who frightened the editor and thus prevented any full development of his ideas in the paper; he had to turn aside to generalities such as the necessity of extending the activities of the Congress beyond the circle of the bourgeois or middle class and calling into it the masses. Finally, Sri Aurobindo suspended all public activity of this kind and worked only in secret till 1905, but he contacted Tilak whom he regarded as the one possible leader for a revolutionary party and met him at the Ahmedabad Congress; there Tilak took him out of the pandal and talked to him for an hour in the grounds expressing his contempt for the Reformist movement and explaining his own line of action in Maharashtra.

Sri Aurobindo included in the scope of his revolutionary work one kind of activity which afterwards became an important item in the public programme of the Nationalist party. He encouraged the young men in the centres of work to propagate the Swadeshi idea which at that time was only in its infancy and hardly more than a fad of the few.

One of the ablest men in these revolutionary groups was a Mahratta named Sakham Ganesh Deuskar who was an able writer in Bengali (his family had been long domiciled in Bengal) and who had written a popular life of Shivaji in Bengali in which he first brought in the name of Swaraj, afterwards adopted by the Nationalists as their word for independence, —Swaraj became one item of the fourfold Nationalist programme. He published a book entitled *Deshar Katha* describing in exhaustive detail the British commercial and industrial exploitation of India. This book had an immense repercussion in Bengal, captured the mind of young Bengal and assisted more than anything else in the preparation of the Swadeshi movement. Sri Aurobindo himself had always considered the shaking off of this economic yoke and the development of Indian trade and industry as a necessary concomitant of the revolutionary endeavour.

As long as he was in the Baroda Service, Sri Aurobindo could not take part publicly in politics. Apart from that, he preferred to remain and act and even to lead from behind the scenes without his name being known in public; it was the Government's action in prosecuting him as editor of the *Bande Mataram* that forced him into public view. And from that time forward he became openly,

what he had been for sometime already, a prominent leader of the Nationalist party, its principal leader in action in Bengal and the organiser there of its policy and strategy. He had decided in his mind the lines on which he wanted the country's action to run: what he planned was very much the same as was developed afterwards in Ireland as the Sinn Fein movement; but Sri Aurobindo did not derive his ideas, as some have represented, from Ireland, for the Irish movement became prominent later and he knew nothing of it till after he had withdrawn to Pondicherry. There was, moreover, a capital difference between India and Ireland which made his work much more difficult; for all its past history had accustomed the Irish people to rebellion against British rule and this history might be even described as a constant struggle for independence intermittent in its action but permanently there in principle; there was nothing of this kind in India. Sri Aurobindo had to establish and generalise the idea of independence in the mind of the Indian people and at the same time to push first a party and then the whole nation into an intense and organised political activity which would lead to the accomplishment of that ideal. His idea was to capture the Congress and to make it an instrument for revolutionary action instead of a centre of a

timid constitutional agitation which would only talk and pass resolutions and recommendations to the foreign Government; if the Congress could not be captured, then a central revolutionary body would have to be created which could do this work. It was to be a sort of State within the State giving its directions to the people and creating organised bodies and institutions which would be its means of action; there must be an increasing non-cooperation and passive resistance which would render the administration of the country by a foreign Government difficult or finally impossible, a universal unrest which would wear down repression and finally, if need be, an open revolt all over the country. This plan included a boycott of British trade, the substitution of national schools for the Government institutions, the creation of arbitration courts to which the people could resort instead of depending on the ordinary courts of law, the creation of volunteer forces which would be the nucleus of an army of open revolt, and all other action that could make the programme complete. The part Sri Aurobindo took publicly in Indian politics was of brief duration, for he turned aside from it in 1910 and withdrew to Pondicherry; much of his programme lapsed in his absence, but enough had been done to change the whole face of Indian

politics and the whole spirit of the Indian people to make independence its aim and non-cooperation and resistance its method, and even an imperfect application of this policy heightening into sporadic periods of revolt has been sufficient to bring about the victory. The course of subsequent events followed largely the line of Sri Aurobindo's idea. The Congress was finally captured by the Nationalist party, declared independence its aim, organised itself for action, took almost the whole nation minus a majority of the Mohammedans and a minority of the depressed classes into acceptance of its leadership and eventually formed the first national, though not as yet an independent, Government in India and secured from Britain acceptance of independence for India.

At first Sri Aurobindo took part in Congress politics only from behind the scenes, as he had not yet decided to leave the Baroda Service; but he took long leave without pay in which, besides carrying on personally the secret revolutionary work, he attended the Barisal Conference broken up by the police and toured East Bengal along with Bepin Pal and associated himself closely with the forward group in the Congress. It was during this period that he joined Bepin Pal in the editing of the *Bande Mataram*, founded the new political party in

Bengal and attended the Congress session at Calcutta at which the Extremists, though still a minority, succeeded under the leadership of Tilak in imposing part of their political programme on the Congress. The founding of the Bengal National College gave him the opportunity he needed and enabled him to resign his position in the Baroda Service and join the College as its Principal. Subodh Mullick, one of Sri Aurobindo's collaborators in his secret action and afterwards also in Congress politics, in whose house he usually lived when he was in Calcutta, had given a lakh of rupees for this foundation and had stipulated that Sri Aurobindo should be given a post of professor in the College with a salary of Rs. 150; so he was now free to give his whole time to the service of the country. Bepin Pal, who had been long expounding a policy of self-help and non-cooperation in his weekly journal, now started a daily with the name of *Bande Mataram*, but it was likely to be a brief adventure since he began with only Rs. 500 in his pocket and no firm assurance of financial assistance in the future. He asked Sri Aurobindo to join him in this venture to which a ready consent was given, for now Sri Aurobindo saw his opportunity for starting the public propaganda necessary for his revolutionary purpose. He called a meeting of the forward group of young

men in the Congress and they decided then to organise themselves openly as a new political party joining hands with the corresponding group in Maharashtra under the proclaimed leadership of Tilak and to join battle with the Moderate party which was done at the Calcutta session. He also persuaded them to take up the *Bande Mataram* daily as their party organ and a *Bande Mataram* Company was started to finance the paper, whose direction Sri Aurobindo undertook during the absence of Bepin Pal who was sent on a tour in the districts to proclaim the purpose and programme of the new party. The new party was at once successful and the *Bande Mataram* paper began to circulate throughout India. On its staff were not only Bepin Pal and Sri Aurobindo but some other very able writers, Shyam Sundar Chakravarty, Hemendra Prasad Ghose and Bejoy Chatterjee. Shyam Sundar and Bejoy were masters of the English language, each with a style of his own; Shyam Sundar caught up something like Sri Aurobindo's way of writing and later on many took his articles for Sri Aurobindo's. But after a time dissensions arose between Bepin Pal on one side and the other contributors and the directors of the Company because of temperamental incompatibility and differences of political view especially with regard to the secret revolutionary

action with which others sympathised but to which Bepin Pal was opposed. This ended soon in Bepin Pal's separation from the journal. Sri Aurobindo would not have consented to this departure, for he regarded the qualities of Pal as a great asset to the *Bande Mataram*, since Pal, though not a man of action or capable of political leadership, was perhaps the best and most original political thinker in the country, an excellent writer and a magnificent orator: but the separation was effected behind Sri Aurobindo's back when he was convalescing from a dangerous attack of fever. His name was even announced without his consent in *Bande Mataram* as editor but for one day only, as he immediately put a stop to it since he was still formally in the Baroda Service and in no way eager to have his name brought forward in public. Henceforward, however, he controlled the policy of the *Bande Mataram* along with that of the party in Bengal. Bepin Pal had stated the aim of the new party as complete self-government free from British control; but this could have meant or at least included the Moderate aim of colonial self-government and Dadabhai Naoroji as President of the Calcutta session of the Congress had actually tried to capture the name of Swaraj, the Extremists' term for independence, for this colonial self-government. Sri Aurobindo's

first preoccupation was to declare openly for complete and absolute independence as the aim of political action in India and to insist on this persistently in the pages of the journal; he was the first politician in India who had the courage to do this in public and he was immediately successful. The party took up the word Swaraj to express its own ideal of independence and it soon spread everywhere; but it was taken up as the ideal of the Congress much later on at the Karachi session of that body when it had been reconstituted and renovated under Nationalist leadership. The journal declared and developed a new political programme for the country as the programme of the Nationalist party, non-cooperation, passive resistance, Swadeshi, Boycott, national education, settlement of disputes in law by popular arbitration and other items of Sri Aurobindo's plan. Sri Aurobindo published in the paper a series of articles on passive resistance, another developing a political philosophy of revolution and wrote many leaders aimed at destroying the shibboleths and superstitions of the Moderate Party, such as the belief in British justice and benefits bestowed by foreign government in India, faith in British law courts and in the adequacy of the education given in schools and universities in India and stressed more strongly and persistently than had

been done the emasculation, stagnation or slow progress, poverty, economic dependence, absence of a rich industrial activity and all other evil results of a foreign government; he insisted especially that even if an alien rule were benevolent and beneficent, that could not be a substitute for a free and healthy national life. Assisted by this publicity the ideas of the Nationalists gained ground everywhere, especially in the Punjab which had before been predominantly Moderate. The *Bande Mataram* was almost unique in journalistic history in the influence it exercised in converting the mind of a people and preparing it for revolution. But its weakness was on the financial side; for the Extremists were still a poor man's party. So long as Sri Aurobindo was there in active control, he managed with great difficulty to secure sufficient public support for running the paper, but not for expanding it as he wanted, and when he was arrested and held in jail for a year, the economic situation of *Bande Mataram* became desperate: finally, it was decided that the journal should die a glorious death rather than perish by starvation and Bejoy Chatterji was commissioned to write an article for which the Government would certainly stop the publication of the paper. Sri Aurobindo had always taken care to give no handle in the editorial articles of the *Bande*

Mataram either for a prosecution for sedition or any other drastic action fatal to its existence; an editor of *The Statesman* complained that the paper reeked with sedition patently visible between every line, but it was so skilfully written that no legal action could be taken. The manœuvre succeeded and the life of the *Bande Mataram* came to an end in Sri Aurobindo's absence.

The Nationalist programme could only achieve a partial beginning before it was temporarily broken by severe government repression. Its most important practical item was Swadeshi plus Boycott; for Swadeshi much was done to make the idea general and a few beginnings were made, but the greater results showed themselves only afterwards in the course of time. Sri Aurobindo was anxious that this part of the movement should be not only propagated in idea but given a practical organisation and an effective force. He wrote from Baroda asking whether it would not be possible to bring in the industrialists and manufacturers and gain the financial support of landed magnates and create an organisation in which men of industrial and commercial ability and experience and not politicians alone could direct operations and devise means of carrying out the policy; but he was told that it was impossible, the industrialists and the landed magnates were too

timid to join in the movement, and the big commercial men were all interested in the import of British goods and therefore on the side of the status quo: so he had to abandon his idea of the organisation of Swadeshi and Boycott. Both Tilak and Sri Aurobindo were in favour of an effective boycott of British goods—but of British goods only; for there was little in the country to replace foreign articles: so they recommended the substitution for the British of foreign goods from Germany and Austria and America so that the fullest pressure might be brought upon England. They wanted the Boycott to be a political weapon and not merely an aid to Swadeshi; the total boycott of all foreign goods was an impracticable idea and the very limited application of it recommended in Congress resolutions was too small to be politically effective. They were for national self-sufficiency in key industries, the production of necessities and of all manufactures of which India had the natural means, but complete self-sufficiency or autarchy did not seem practicable or even desirable since a free India would need to export goods as well as supply them for internal consumption and for that she must import as well and maintain an international exchange. But the sudden enthusiasm for the boycott of all foreign goods was wide and sweeping and the leaders had

to conform to this popular cry and be content with the impulse it gave to the Swadeshi idea. National education was another item to which Sri Aurobindo attached much importance. He had been disgusted with the education given by the British system in the schools and colleges and universities, a system of which as a professor in the Baroda College he had full experience. He felt that it tended to dull and impoverish and tie up the naturally quick and brilliant and supple Indian intelligence, to teach it bad intellectual habits and spoil by narrow information and mechanical instruction its originality and productivity. The movement began well and many national schools were established in Bengal and many able men became teachers, but still the development was insufficient and the economical position of the schools precarious. Sri Aurobindo had decided to take up the movement personally and see whether it could not be given a greater expansion and a stronger foundation, but his departure from Bengal cut short this plan. In the repression and the general depression caused by it, most of the schools failed to survive. The idea lived on and it may be hoped that it will one day find an adequate form and body. The idea of people's courts was taken up and worked in some districts, not without success, but this too perished in the storm. The

idea of volunteer groupings had a stronger vitality; it lived on, took shape, multiplied its formations and its workers were the spearhead of the movement of direct action which broke out from time to time in the struggle for freedom. The purely political elements of the Nationalist programme and activities were those which lasted and after each wave of repression and depression renewed the thread of the life of the movement for liberation and kept it recognisably one throughout nearly fifty years of its struggle. But the greatest thing done in those years was the creation of a new spirit in the country. In the enthusiasm that swept surging everywhere with the cry of *Bande Mataram* ringing on all sides men felt it glorious to be alive and dare and act together and hope; the old apathy and timidity was broken and a force created which nothing could destroy and which rose again and again in wave after wave till it carried India to the beginning of a complete victory.

After the *Bande Mataram* case, Sri Aurobindo became the recognised leader of Nationalism in Bengal. He led the party at the session of the Bengal Provincial Conference at Midnapore where there was a vehement clash between the two parties. He now for the first time became a speaker on the public platform, addressed large meetings at Surat

and presided over the Nationalist conference there. He stopped at several places on his way back to Calcutta and was the speaker at large meetings called to hear him. He led the party again at the session of the Provincial Conference at Hooghly. There it became evident for the first time that Nationalism was gaining the ascendant, for it commanded a majority among the delegates and in the Subjects Committee Sri Aurobindo was able to defeat the Moderates' resolution welcoming the Reforms and pass his own resolution stigmatising them as utterly inadequate and unreal and rejecting them. But the Moderate leaders threatened to secede if this was maintained and to avoid a scission he consented to allow the Moderate resolution to pass, but spoke at the public session explaining his decision and asking the Nationalists to acquiesce in it in spite of their victory so as to keep some unity in the political forces of Bengal. The Nationalist delegates, at first triumphant and clamorous, accepted the decision and left the hall quietly at Sri Aurobindo's order so that they might not have to vote either for or against the Moderate resolution. This caused much amazement and discomfiture in the minds of the Moderate leaders who complained that the people had refused to listen to their old and tried leaders and clamoured against them, but at the

bidding of a young man new to politics they had obeyed in disciplined silence as if a single body.

About this period Sri Aurobindo had decided to take up charge of a Bengali daily, *Nava Shakti*, and had moved from his rented house in Scotts Lane, where he had been living with his wife and sister, to rooms in the office of this newspaper, and there, before he could begin this new venture, early one morning while he was still sleeping, the police charged up the stairs, revolver in hand, and arrested him. He was taken to the police station and thence to Alipore Jail where he remained for a year during the magistrate's investigation and the trial in the Sessions Court at Alipore. At first he was lodged for some time in a solitary cell, but afterwards transferred to a large section of the jail where he lived in one huge room with the other prisoners in the case; subsequently, after the assassination of the approver in the jail, all the prisoners were confined in contiguous but separate cells and met only in the court or in the daily exercise where they could not speak to each other. It was in the second period that Sri Aurobindo made the acquaintance of most of his fellow accused. In the jail he spent almost all his time in reading the Gita and the Upanishads and in intensive meditation and the practice of Yoga. This he pursued even in the second interval

when he had no opportunity of being alone and had to accustom himself to meditation amid general talk and laughter, the playing of games and much noise and disturbance; in the first and third periods he had full opportunity and used it to the full. In the Sessions Court the accused were confined in a large prisoner's cage and here during the whole day he remained absorbed in his meditation, attending little to the trial and hardly listening to the evidence. C. R. Das, one of his Nationalist collaborators and a famous lawyer, had put aside his large practice and devoted himself for months to the defence of Sri Aurobindo, who left the case entirely to him and troubled no more about it; for he had been assured from within and knew that he would be acquitted. During this period his view of life was radically changed; he had taken up Yoga with the original idea of acquiring spiritual force and energy and divine guidance for his work in life. But now the inner spiritual life and realisation which had continually been increasing in magnitude and universality and assuming a larger place took him up entirely and his work became a part and result of it and besides far exceeded the service and liberation of the country and fixed itself in an aim, previously only glimpsed, which was world-wide in its

bearing and concerned with the whole future of humanity.

When he came out from jail Sri Aurobindo found the whole political aspect of the country altered; most of the Nationalist leaders were in jail or in self-imposed exile and there was a general discouragement and depression, though the feeling in the country had not ceased but was only suppressed and was growing by its suppression. He determined to continue the struggle; he held weekly meetings in Calcutta, but the attendance which had numbered formerly thousands full of enthusiasm, was now only of hundreds and had no longer the same force and life. He also went to places in the districts to speak and at one of these delivered his speech at Uttarpara in which for the first time he spoke publicly of his Yoga and his spiritual experiences. He started also two weeklies, one in English and one in Bengali, the *Karmayogin* and *Dharma* which had a fairly large circulation and were, unlike the *Bande Mataram*, easily self-supporting. He attended and spoke at the Provincial Conference at Barisal in 1909: for in Bengal owing to the compromise at Hooghly the two parties had not split altogether apart and both joined in the Conference though there could be no representative of the Nationalist Party at the meeting of the Central Moderate Body

which had taken the place of the Congress. Surendra Nath Banerji had indeed called a private conference attended by Sri Aurobindo and one or two other leaders of the Nationalists to discuss a project of uniting the two parties at the session in Benares and giving a joint fight to the dominant right wing of the Moderates; for he had always dreamt of becoming again the leader of a united Bengal with the Extremist Party as his strong right arm: but that would have necessitated the Nationalists being appointed as delegates by the Bengal Moderates and accepting the constitution imposed at Surat. This Sri Aurobindo refused to do; he demanded a change in that constitution enabling newly formed associations to elect delegates so that the Nationalists might independently send their representatives to the All-India session and on this point the negotiations broke down. Sri Aurobindo began, however, to consider how to revive the national movement under the changed circumstances. He glanced at the possibility of falling back on a Home Rule movement which the Government could not repress, but this, which was actually realised by Mrs. Besant later on, would have meant a postponement and a falling back from the ideal of independence. He looked also at the possibility of an intense and organised passive

resistance movement in the manner afterwards adopted by Gandhi. He saw, however, that he himself could not be the leader of such a movement.

At no time did he consent to have anything to do with the sham Reforms which were all the Government at that period cared to offer. He held up always the slogan of 'no compromise' or, as he now put it in his Open Letter to his countrymen published in the *Karmayogin*, 'no co-operation without control.' It was only if real political, administrative and financial control were given to popular ministers in an elected Assembly that he would have anything to do with offers from the British Government. Of this he saw no sign until the proposal of the Montagu Reforms in which first something of the kind seemed to appear. He foresaw that the British Government would have to begin trying to meet the national aspiration half-way, but he would not anticipate that moment before it actually came. The Montagu Reforms came nine years after Sri Aurobindo had retired to Pondicherry and by that time he had abandoned all outward and public political activity in order to devote himself to his spiritual work, acting only by his spiritual force on the movement in India, until his prevision of real negotiations between the British Government

and the Indian leaders was fulfilled by the Cripps' proposal and the events that came after.

Meanwhile the Government were determined to get rid of Sri Aurobindo as the only considerable obstacle left to the success of their repressive policy. As they could not send him to the Andamans they decided to deport him. This came to the knowledge of Sister Nivedita and she informed Sri Aurobindo and asked him to leave British India and work from outside so that his work would not be stopped or totally interrupted. Sri Aurobindo contented himself with publishing in the *Karmayogin* a signed article in which he spoke of the project of deportation and left the country what he called his last will and testament; he felt sure that this would kill the idea of deportation and in fact it so turned out. Deportation left aside, the Government could only wait for some opportunity for prosecution for sedition and this chance came to them when Sri Aurobindo published in the same paper another signed article reviewing the political situation. The article was sufficiently moderate in its tone and later on the High Court refused to regard it as seditious and acquitted the printer. Sri Aurobindo one night at the *Karmayogin* office received information of the Government's intention to search the office and arrest him. While considering what

should be his attitude, he received a sudden command from above to go to Chandernagore in French India. He obeyed the command at once, for it was now his rule to move only as he was moved by the divine guidance and never to resist and depart from it; he did not stay to consult with anyone, but in ten minutes was at the river *ghat* and in a boat plying on the Ganges; in a few hours he was at Chandernagore where he went into secret residence. He sent a message to Sister Nivedita asking her to take up the editing of the *Karmayogin* in his absence. This was the end of his active connection with his two journals. At Chandernagore he plunged entirely into solitary meditation and ceased all other activity. Then there came to him a call to proceed to Pondicherry. A boat manned by some young revolutionaries of Uttarpara took him to Calcutta; there he boarded the *Dupleix* and reached Pondicherry on April 4, 1910.

At Pondicherry, from this time onwards Sri Aurobindo's practice of Yoga became more and more absorbing. He dropped all participation in any public political activity, refused more than one request to preside at sessions of the restored Indian National Congress and made a rule of abstention from any public utterance of any kind not connected with his spiritual activities or any contri-

bution of writings or articles except what he wrote afterwards in the *Arya*. For some years he kept up some private communication with the revolutionary forces he had led, through one or two individuals, but this also he dropped after a time and his abstention from any kind of participation in politics became complete. As his vision of the future grew clearer, he saw that the eventual independence of India was assured by the march of forces of which he became aware, that Britain would be compelled by the pressure of Indian resistance and by the pressure of international events to concede independence and that she was already moving towards that eventuality with whatever opposition and reluctance. He felt that there would be no need of armed insurrection and that the secret preparation for it could be dropped without injury to the nationalist cause, although the revolutionary spirit had to be maintained and would be maintained intact. His own personal intervention in politics would therefore be no longer indispensable. Apart from all this, the magnitude of the spiritual work set before him became more and more clear to him, and he saw that the concentration of all his energies on it was necessary. Accordingly, when the Ashram came into existence, he kept it free from all political connections or action; even when

he intervened in politics twice afterwards on special occasions, this intervention was purely personal and the Ashram was not concerned in it. The British Government and numbers of people besides could not believe that Sri Aurobindo had ceased from all political action and it was supposed by them that he was secretly participating in revolutionary activities and even creating a secret organisation in the security of French India. But all this was pure imagination and rumour and there was nothing of the kind. His retirement from political activity was complete, just as was his personal retirement into solitude in 1910.

But this did not mean, as most people supposed, that he had retired into some height of spiritual experience devoid of any further interest in the world or in the fate of India. It could not mean that, for the very principle of his Yoga was not only to realise the Divine and attain to a complete spiritual consciousness, but also to take all life and all world activity into the scope of this spiritual consciousness and action and to base life on the Spirit and give it a spiritual meaning. In his retirement Sri Aurobindo kept a close watch on all that was happening in the world and in India and actively intervened whenever necessary, but solely with a spiritual force and silent spiritual action; for

it is part of the experience of those who have advanced far in Yoga that besides the ordinary forces and activities of the mind and life and body in Matter, there are other forces and powers that can act and do act from behind and from above; there is also a spiritual dynamic power which can be possessed by those who are advanced in the spiritual consciousness, though all do not care to possess or, possessing, to use it, and this power is greater than any other and more effective. It was this force which, as soon as he had attained to it, he used, at first only in a limited field of personal work, but afterwards in a constant action upon the world forces. He had no reason to be dissatisfied with the results or to feel the necessity of any other kind of action. Twice, however, he found it advisable to take in addition other action of a public kind. The first was in relation to the second World War. At the beginning he did not actively concern himself with it, but when it appeared as if Hitler would crush all the forces opposed to him and Nazism dominate the world, he began to intervene. He declared himself publicly on the side of the Allies, made some financial contributions in answer to the appeal for funds and encouraged those who sought his advice to enter the army or share in the war effort. Inwardly, he put his spiritual force

behind the Allies from the moment of Dunkirk when everybody was expecting the immediate fall of England and the definite triumph of Hitler, and he had the satisfaction of seeing the rush of German victory almost immediately arrested and the tide of war begin to turn in the opposite direction. This he did, because he saw that behind Hitler and Nazism were dark Asuric forces and that their success would mean the enslavement of mankind to the tyranny of evil, and a set-back to the course of evolution and especially to the spiritual evolution of mankind: it would lead also to the enslavement not only of Europe but of Asia, and in it of India, an enslavement far more terrible than any this country had ever endured, and the undoing of all the work that had been done for her liberation. It was this reason also that induced him to support publicly the Cripps' offer and to press the Congress leaders to accept it. He had not, for various reasons, intervened with his spiritual force against the Japanese aggression until it became evident that Japan intended to attack and even invade and conquer India. He allowed certain letters he had written in support of the war affirming his views of the Asuric nature and inevitable outcome of Hitlerism to become public. He supported the Cripps' offer because by its acceptance India and Britain

could stand united against the Asuric forces and the solution of Cripps could be used as a step towards independence. When negotiations failed, Sri Aurobindo returned to his reliance on the use of spiritual force alone against the aggressor and had the satisfaction of seeing the tide of Japanese victory, which had till then swept everything before it, change immediately into a tide of rapid, crushing and finally immense and overwhelming defeat. He had also after a time the satisfaction of seeing his previsions about the future of India justify themselves so that she stands independent with whatever internal difficulties.

(Sri Aurobindo was now in Calcutta and he was in his element. He had given up his Baroda job, its settled salary and seductive prospects without any hesitation.)

Sri Aurobindo was present at the Congress in 1904 and again in 1906 and took a part in the counsels of the Extremist Party and in the formation of its fourfold programme—"Swaraj, Swadeshi, Boycott, National Education"—which the Moderate leaders after a severe tussle behind the scenes were obliged to incorporate in the resolutions of 1906. Bepin Pal had just started a daily paper *Bande Mataram*

with only 500 rupees in his pocket. Sri Aurobindo took up the joint editorship of the Journal, edited the paper during Bepin Pal's absence and induced the Nationalist Party to take it up as their organ and finance it. He called a meeting of the party leaders at which it was decided at his instance to give up the behind-the-scenes jostlings with the Moderates, and declare an open war on Moderatism and place before the country what was practically a revolutionary propaganda. He gave up his Baroda job some time after this; he had taken indefinite leave without pay; for this reason he did not take up officially and publicly the editorship of the *Bande Mataram* although after Bepin Pal left that post, he was practically in full control of the policy of the paper.

(The Bengal National College was founded and Sri Aurobindo became its Principal. But owing to differences with the College authorities he resigned his position.)

At an early period he left the organisation of the College to the educationist Satish Mukherjee and plunged fully into politics. When the *Bande Mataram* case was brought against him he resigned his post in order not to embarrass the College

authorities but resumed it again on his acquittal. During the Alipore case he resigned finally at the request of the College authorities.

(After resigning from the Bengal National College Sri Aurobindo was free to associate himself actively with the Nationalist Party and its organ "Bande Mataram".)

It was done long before that as the above account will show.

SRI AUROBINDO'S POLITICAL POLICY IN "BANDE MATARAM" ARTICLES

(I)

As a politician it was part of Sri Aurobindo's principles never to appeal to the British people; that he would have considered as part of the mendicant policy. These articles and other items (satiric verse, parodies, etc.) in *Bande Mataram* referred to in these pages (not of course *Vidula* and *Perseus*) were the work of Shyam Sundar Chakravarti, not of Sri Aurobindo. Shyam Sundar was a witty parodist and could write with much humour as also with a telling rhetoric; he had caught up some imitation of

Sri Aurobindo's style and many could not distinguish between their writings. In Sri Aurobindo's absence from Calcutta it was Shyam Sundar who wrote most of the *Bande Mataram* editorials, those excepted which were sent by Sri Aurobindo from Deoghar.

(2)

Sri Aurobindo never brought any rancour into his politics. He never had any hatred for England or the English people; he based his claim for freedom for India on the inherent right to freedom, not on any charge of misgovernment or oppression; if he attacked persons even violently, it was for their views or political action, not from any other motive.

(Earlier in the year 1907 he had been prosecuted in connection with his editorship of "Bande Mataram" and the series of articles he wrote in it under the heading, "The New Path".)

No—the prosecution was for a letter written by somebody to the Editor and for the publication of articles included in the *Jugantar* case but not actually used by the prosecution. The *Bande Mataram* was never prosecuted for its editorial articles. The editor of *The Statesman* complained that they were

too diabolically clever, crammed full of sedition between the lines, but legally unattackable because of the skill of the language. The Government must have shared this view, for they never ventured to attack the paper for its editorial or other articles, whether Sri Aurobindo's or from the pen of his three editorial colleagues. There is also the fact that Sri Aurobindo never based his case for freedom on racial hatred or charges of tyranny or misgovernment, but always on the inalienable right of the nation to independence. His stand was that even good government could not take the place of national government—independence.

(The prosecution had failed and he was acquitted, but it had succeeded, if anything, only in putting him to the forefront and making the Indian intelligentsia only more than ever eager to read the "Bande Mataram".)

Sri Aurobindo had confined himself to writing and leadership behind the scenes, not caring to advertise himself or put forward his personality, but the imprisonment and exile of other leaders and the publicity given to his name by the case compelled him to come forward and take the lead on the public platform.

(From 1904 an extremist section had been formed in the Congress and its members were waiting for the Congress to meet at Bombay to make themselves felt.)

It is not clear to what this refers. In 1904 the Extremist Party had not been publicly formed, although there was an advanced section in the Congress, strong in Maharashtra but still small and weak elsewhere and composed mostly of young men; there were sometimes disputes behind the scenes, but nothing came out in public. These men of extremer views were not even an organised group; it was Sri Aurobindo who in 1906 persuaded this group in Bengal to take public position as a party, proclaim Tilak as their leader and enter into a contest with the Moderate leaders for the control of the Congress and of public opinion and action in the country. The first great public clash between the two parties took place in the sessions of the Congress at Calcutta where Sri Aurobindo was present but still working behind the scenes, the second at the Bengal Provincial Conference at Midnapore where he for the first time acted publicly as the leader of the Bengal Nationalists, and the final break took place at Surat in 1907.

(Muslims, the descendants of foreigners, favoured the partition of Bengal.)

This would seem to indicate that all the Moham-medans in India are descendants of foreigners, but the idea of two nationalities in India is only a new-fangled notion invented by Jinnah for his purposes and contrary to the facts. More than 90% of the Indian Mussalmans are descendants of converted Hindus and belong as much to the Indian nation as the Hindus themselves. This process of conversion has continued all along; Jinnah is himself a descendant of a Hindu, converted in fairly recent times, named Jinahbhai and many of the most famous Mohammedan leaders have a similar origin.

(Assam had a majority of Muslims.)

The majority in Assam is made up of the Hindus and tribal people; in Assam proper the Mussalmans are only 20% of the population. The balance has been altered by the inclusion of Sylhet, a Bengali district in Assam, but even so the non-Mussalmans predominate. At present a Congress Government is in power in Assam elected by a large majority and Assam is vehemently refusing to be grouped with Mussalman Bengal in the new constitution.

SRI AUROBINDO'S PART IN THE BARISAL CONFERENCE IN 1906

Sri Aurobindo took part in the Barisal Conference and was in the front row of three persons in the procession which was dispersed by the police charge. After the breaking up of the Conference he accompanied Bepin Pal in a tour of East Bengal where enormous meetings were held,—in one district in spite of the prohibition of the District Magistrate.

THE SURAT CONGRESS OF DECEMBER 1907

(I)

This version does not represent actually the facts as Sri Aurobindo remembers them. So far as he knows there was no attempt at fire. The session of the Congress had first been arranged at Nagpur, but Nagpur was predominantly a Mahratta city and violently extremist. Gujerat was at that time predominantly Moderate, there were very few Nationalists and Surat was a stronghold of Moderatism though afterwards Gujerat became, especially after Gandhi took the lead, one of the most revolutionary of the provinces. So the Moderate leaders decided

to hold the Congress at Surat. The Nationalists however came there in strength from all parts, they held public conference with Sri Aurobindo as President and for some time it was doubtful which side would have the majority, but finally in this Moderate city that party was able to bring in a crowd of so-called delegates up to the number of 1,300 while the Nationalists were able by the same method to muster something over 1,100. It was known that the Moderate leaders had prepared a new constitution for the Congress which would make it practically impossible for the extreme party to command a majority at any annual session for many years to come. The younger Nationalists, especially those from Maharashtra, were determined to prevent this by any means and it was decided by them to break the Congress if they could not swamp it; this decision was unknown to Tilak and the older leaders. But it was known to Sri Aurobindo. At the sessions Tilak went on to the platform to propose a resolution regarding the presidentship of the Congress; the President appointed by the Moderates refused to him the permission to speak, but Tilak insisted on his right and began to read his resolution and speak. There was a tremendous uproar, the young Gujerati volunteers lifted up chairs over the head of Tilak to beat him. At that

the Mahrattas became furious, a Mahratta shoe came hurtling across the pavilion aimed at the President, Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh, and hit Surendra Nath Banerji on the shoulder. The young Mahrattas in a body charged up to the platform, the Moderate leaders fled; after a short fight on the platform with chairs, the session broke up not to be resumed. The Moderate leaders decided to suspend the Congress and replace it by a national conference with a constitution and arrangement which would make it safe for their party. Meanwhile, Lajpatrai came to Tilak and informed him that the Government had decided, if the Congress split, to crush the Extremists by the most ruthless repression. Tilak thought, and the events proved that he was right, that the country was not yet ready to face successfully such a repression and he proposed to circumvent both the Moderate plan and the Government plan by the Nationalists joining the Conference and signing the statement of adhesion to the new constitution demanded by the Moderates. Sri Aurobindo and some other leaders were opposed to this submission; they did not believe that the Moderates would admit any Nationalists to their conference (and this proved to be the case) and they wanted the country to be asked to face the repression. Thus the Congress ceased for a time

to exist; but the Moderate Conference was not a success and was attended only by small and always dwindling numbers. Sri Aurobindo had hoped that the country would be strong enough to face the repression, at least in Bengal and Maharashtra, where the enthusiasm had become intense and almost universal; but he thought also that even if there was a temporary collapse the repression would create a deep change in the hearts and minds of the people and the whole nation would swing over to nationalism and the ideal of independence. This actually happened and when Tilak returned from jail in Burma after six years, he was able in conjunction with Mrs. Besant not only to revive the Congress but to make it representative of a nation pledged to the nationalist cause. The Moderate Party shrank into a small body of liberals and even these finally subscribed to the ideal of complete independence.

(2)

History very seldom records the things that were decisive but took place behind the veil; it records the shown front of the curtain. Very few people know that it was I (without consulting Tilak) who gave the order that led to the breaking

of the Congress and was responsible for the refusal to join the new-fangled Moderate Convention which were the two decisive happenings at Surat. Even my action in giving the movement in Bengal its militant turn or founding the revolutionary movement is very little known.

SRI AUROBINDO'S IMPRESSION OF GOKHALE

After an hour's conversation with Gokhale in the train between Ahmedabad and Baroda it was impossible for Sri Aurobindo to retain any great respect for Gokhale as a politician, whatever his merits as a man.

(The "political tour" on his way to Calcutta after the Surat Congress.)

There was no tour. Sri Aurobindo went to Poona with Lele and after his return to Bombay went to Calcutta. All the speeches he made were at this time (except those at Bombay and at Baroda) at places on his way wherever he stopped for a day or two.

(Sri Aurobindo's "mood of inexplicable serenity" after meditating with Lele.)

(1)

Not inexplicable certainly; it was the condition of silence of the mind to which he had come by his meditation for 3 days with Lele in Baroda and which he kept for many months and indeed always thereafter, all activity proceeding on the surface; but at that time there was no activity on the surface. Lele told him to make *namaskar* to the audience and wait and speech would come to him from some other source than the mind. So, in fact, the speech came, and ever since all speech, writing, thought and outward activity have so come to him from the same source above the brain-mind.

(2)

The passage bracketed should be omitted. It tends to give an incorrect impression about the nature of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga and of what was happening in him at the time. The Yoga was going on in him all the time, even during all his outward action but he was not withdrawn into himself or 'dazed' as some of his friends thought. If he did not reply to questions or suggestions it was because he did not wish to and took refuge in silence.

EARLY SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES BEFORE MEETING LELE

What Lele asked him was whether he could surrender himself entirely to the Inner Guide within him and move as it moved him; if so he needed no instructions from Lele or anybody else. This Sri Aurobindo accepted and made that his rule of sadhana and of life. Before he met Lele, Sri Aurobindo had some spiritual experiences, but that was before he knew anything about Yoga or even what Yoga was,— e.g., a vast calm which descended upon him at the moment when he stepped first on Indian soil after his long absence, in fact with his first step on the Apollo Bunder in Bombay: (this calm surrounded him and remained for long months afterwards); the realisation of the vacant Infinite while walking on the ridge of the Takhti-Suleman in Kashmir; the living presence of Kali in a shrine on the banks of the Narmada; the vision of the Godhead surging up from within when in danger of a carriage accident in Baroda in the first year of his stay, etc. But these were inner experiences coming of themselves and with a sudden unexpectedness, not part of a sadhana. He started Yoga by himself without a Guru, getting the rule from a friend, a disciple of Brahmananda of Ganga Math; it was confined at first to assiduous practice of pranayama

(at one time for 6 hours or more a day). There was no conflict or wavering between Yoga and politics; when he started Yoga, he carried on both without any idea of opposition between them. He wanted however to find a Guru. He met a Naga Sannyasi in the course of this search, but did not accept him as Guru, though he was confirmed by him in a belief in Yoga-power when he saw him cure Barin in almost a moment of a violent and clinging hill-fever by merely cutting through a glassful of water crosswise with a knife while he repeated a silent mantra. Barin drank and was cured. He also met Brahmananda and was greatly impressed by him; but he had no helper or Guru in Yoga till he met Lele and that was only for a short time.

(Bhavani Mandir—in those revolutionary days...)

Bhavani Mandir was written by Sri Aurobindo but it was more Barin's idea than his. It was not meant to train people for assassination but for revolutionary preparation of the country. The idea was soon dropped as far as Sri Aurobindo was concerned, but something of the kind was attempted by Barin in the Manicktala Garden and it is to this evidently that Hemchandra refers.

Sri Aurobindo does not remember anything of this kind nor of any formal decision to abandon the Bhavani Mandir idea. This selection of a site and a head of the monastery must have been simply an idea of Barin. He had travelled among the hills trying to find a suitable place but caught hill-fever and had to abandon his search and return to Baroda. Subsequently he went back to Bengal, but Sri Aurobindo did not hear of any discovery of a suitable place. Sakaria Swami was Barin's Guru: he had been a fighter in the Mutiny on the rebel side and he showed at the breaking of the Surat Congress a vehement patriotic excitement which caused his death because it awoke the poison of the bite of a mad dog which he had reduced to inactivity by a process of his Yogic will; but Sri Aurobindo would not have chosen him for any control of the political side of such an institution. The idea of Bhavani Mandir simply lapsed of itself. Sri Aurobindo thought no more about it, but Barin who clung to the idea tried to establish something like it on a small scale in the Manicktala Garden.

(He was "handcuffed" after arrest by the police on 5.5.1908.)

(1)

“Handcuffed”—No, tied with a rope; this was taken off on the protest of Bhupen Bose, the Congress Moderate leader.

(2)

The hands were not tied, the cord was put round his waist, but before leaving the house it was removed on the remonstrance of Bhupendra Nath Bose, the Moderate leader, who on hearing of the arrest had come to question the police about its motive.

(In the Alipore jail Sri Aurobindo started reading the Gita and learning to live its sadhana; he fully apprehended the true inwardness and glory of “Sanatana Dharma”.)

It should rather be said that he had long tried to apprehend the true inwardness and glory of the Indian religious and spiritual tradition, *Sanatana Dharma*, and to accept it in its entirety.

(The case commenced in the Alipore Magistrate’s Court on May 19, 1908 and continued

intermittently for a whole year. Mr. Beachcroft, the magistrate, had been with Sri Aurobindo in Cambridge....The case in due course went up to the Sessions Court and the trial commenced there in October 1908.)

The last sentence: "The case...in October 1908" should come after 'year' at the end of the first sentence. The preliminary trial (a very long one) took place before Birley, a young man unknown to Sri Aurobindo. Beachcroft was not 'magistrate' but judge in the Sessions Court.

THE STATEMENT IN THE ALIPORE COURT

Sri Aurobindo never made a public statement in the Court. When asked by the Court, he said he would leave the case to his lawyers, they would speak for him; he himself did not wish to make any statement or answer the Court's questions. If any such statement as the one spoken of was made, it must have been drawn up by the lawyers on his behalf, not made by himself.

(While in the Alipore jail Sri Aurobindo became ill.)

Sri Aurobindo did not fall ill while in prison; he was in normal health except for a superficial ailment for some time which was of no consequence.

(*A year's seclusion and meditation in the Alipore jail worked a great transformation in Sri Aurobindo.... Once again—now as ever—"service" was his urge to action.*)

The idea was "work" for the country, for the world, finally for the Divine, *nishkām karma*, rather than an ideal of service.

(*Sri Aurobindo's "An Open Letter to My Countrymen" dated July 1909 and the second letter dated December 1909.*)

There is some confusion here and generally with regard to the two letters. Sri Aurobindo was not relying upon any change in Government policy for the effect of the first letter. He writes clearly that the proposed reforms were false and unreal and not acceptable. All he says is that if real reforms giving real power or control were offered, even if they gave only partial and not complete self-government then the Nationalist Party might accept them as the means towards complete self-government. Till then the Nationalists would maintain the struggle and their policy of non-cooperation and passive resistance. He relied not upon this but upon an intuitive perception that the Government would not think it

politic or useful to deport him if he left a programme which others could carry out in his absence. Also the considerations about Home Rule and complete passive resistance had no connection with the first letter, because they did not occur to Sri Aurobindo at that time. It was afterwards about the period of the second signed letter that he weighed the circumstances and the situation in the country and considered whether it would not be necessary for a time to draw back a little in order to make a continued political action possible, *reculer pour mieux sauter*, as the national movement seemed otherwise threatened with a complete pause. A Home Rule movement or a movement of the South African type suggested themselves to him and he foresaw that they might be resorted to in the near future; but he decided that such movements were not for him to lead and that he must go on with the movement for independence as it was. In the second letter also he rejects the reforms as inadequate and advocates a continuance and reorganisation of the nationalist movement.¹ This was on December 25th.,

¹ Sri Aurobindo would have accepted Diarchy as a step if it had given genuine control. It was not till Provincial autonomy was conceded that he felt a real change in the British attitude had begun; the Cripps offer he accepted as a further progress in that change and the final culmination in the Labour Government's new policy as its consummation.

five months after the first letter. Sri Aurobindo does not understand the reference to the *coup de force* and the stratagem: if by the *coup de force* is meant the proposed search and arrest, that was undertaken in connection with and as a result of the second letter which was to be made the subject of a prosecution. As Sri Aurobindo went to Chander-nagore and disappeared from view the search was not made and the warrant was held back and the prosecution postponed till he should again reappear. This happened in February, a month or more after the appearance of the second letter. Sri Aurobindo wanted the police to disclose their hand and act, and the stratagem he wrote about was an answer to a letter forwarded to him at Chander-nagore which he knew to be from a police spy asking him to reappear and face his trial. He replied that he had no reason to do so as there was no public warrant against him and no prosecution had been announced; he thought this would have the effect of the police coming out into the open with a warrant and prosecution and in fact it had this effect.

IV. CORRECTIONS OF WRONG STATEMENTS IN THE PRESS

(I)

[Girija Shankar Roy Chaudhuri, a Bengali literary critic, wrote a series of articles on Sri Aurobindo in the Bengali journal "Udbodhan". One issue especially (Ashar 1351 B.S. June, 1944) contained a number of inaccurate statements. Some points in this article were referred to Sri Aurobindo for verification by the late C.C. Dutt. The letter below is Sri Aurobindo's reply to him giving right factual information on these points. Sri Aurobindo also dictated a few notes correcting some wrong statements in Girija Shankar's article referred to him. These notes along with the wrong statements (shown in brackets) are placed after the letter.]

This is my answer to the questions arising from your letter. Except on one point which calls for

some explanation, I confine myself to the plain facts.

(1) I was the writer of the series of articles on the "Passive Resistance" published in April 1907 to which reference has been made; Bepin Pal had nothing to do with it. He ceased his connection with the paper towards the end of 1906 and from that time onward was not writing any editorials or articles for it. I planned several series of this kind for the *Bande Mataram* and at least three were published of which "Passive Resistance" was one.

(2) The articles published in *Dharma* during February and March 1910 were not written by me. The actual writer was a young man on the sub-editorial staff of the paper. This is well-known to all who were then in the office or connected with it, e.g., Nolini Kanta Gupta who was with me then as he is now still with me here.

(3) I did not go to the Bagbazar Math on my way to Chandernagore or make *pranam* to Sri Saradeshwari Devi. In fact I never met her or even saw her in my life. It was not from Bagbazar but another Ghat (Ganga Ghat) that I went straight by boat to Chandernagore.

(4) Neither Ganen Maharaj nor Nivedita saw me off at the Ghat. Neither of them knew anything

about my going: Nivedita learned of it only afterwards when I sent a message to her asking her to conduct the *Karmayogin* in my absence. She consented and from that time to its cessation of publication was in control of the paper; the editorials during that period were hers.

(5) I did not take my wife for initiation to Sri Saradeshwari Devi; I was given to understand that she was taken there by Sudhira Bose, Debabrata's sister. I heard of it a considerable time afterwards in Pondicherry. I was glad to know that she had found so great a spiritual refuge, but I had no hand in bringing it about.

(6) I did not go to Chandernagore on Sister Nivedita's advice. On a former occasion when she informed me that the Government had decided to deport me, she did urge me to leave British India and do my work from outside; but I told her I did not think it necessary, I would write something that would put a stop to this project. It was in these circumstances that I wrote the signed article "My Last Will and Testament". Nivedita afterwards told me that it had served its purpose, the Government had abandoned the idea of deportation. No occasion arose for her to repeat the advice nor was it at all likely that I would have followed it: she knew nothing beforehand of

the circumstances that led to my departure to Chandernagore.

(7) Here are the facts of that departure. I was in the *Karmayogin* Office when I received the word, on information given by a high-placed police official, that the Office would be searched the next day and myself arrested. (The Office was in fact searched but no warrant was produced against me; I heard nothing more of it till the case was started against the paper later on, but by then I had already left Chandernagore for Pondicherry.) While I was listening to animated comments from those around on the approaching event, I suddenly received a command from above, in a Voice well-known to me, in three words: "Go to Chandernagore". In ten minutes or so I was in the boat for Chandernagore. Ramachandra Majumdar guided me to the Ghat and hailed a boat and I entered into it at once along with my relative Biren Ghose and Moni (Suresh Chandra Chakravarti) who accompanied me to Chandernagore, not turning aside to Bagbazar or anywhere else. We reached our destination while it was still dark: they returned in the morning to Calcutta. I remained in secret entirely engaged in sadhana and my active connection with the two newspapers ceased from that time. Afterwards, under the same "sailing orders" I left Chander-

nagore and reached Pondicherry on April 4, 1910.

I may add in explanation that from the time I left Lele at Bombay after the Surat Sessions and my stay with him in Baroda, Poona and Bombay, I had accepted the rule of following the inner guidance implicitly and moving only as I was moved by the Divine. The spiritual development during the year in jail had turned this into an absolute law of the being. This accounts for my immediate action in obedience to the Adesh received by me.

You can on the strength of this letter cite my authority for your statements on these points to the editor of the *Udbodhan*.

December 5, 1944.

(Sri Aurobindo's Notes on Girija Shankar's article—*Udbodhan*, *Ashadh* 1351 B.S. June 1944)

(*Sister Nivedita was invited in 1904 to Baroda by the Maharaja and Sri Aurobindo had talks with her about Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.*)

I do not remember whether she was invited but I think she was there as a State guest. Khasirao and myself went to receive her at the station.

I do not remember Nivedita speaking to me on spiritual subjects or about Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. We spoke of politics and other subjects. On the way from the station to the town she cried out against the ugliness of the College building and its top-heavy dome and praised the Dharmashala near it. Khasirao stared at her and opined that she must be at least slightly cracked to have such ideas! I was very much enamoured at the time of her book *Kali the Mother* and I think we spoke of that; she had heard, she said, that I was a worshipper of Force, by which she meant that I belonged to the secret revolutionary party like herself, and I was present at her interview with the Maharaja whom she invited to support the secret revolution; she told him that he could communicate with her through me. Sayajirao was much too cunning to plunge into such a dangerous business and never spoke to me about it. That is all I remember.

(Earth of Dakshineshwara was found in Sri Aurobindo's room when the police searched his house in April 1908.)

The earth was brought to me by a young man connected with the Ramakrishna Mission and I

kept it; it was there in my room when the police came to arrest me.

("Bande Mataram" started on 7th August, 1906. The joint stock company was declared on 18th October, 1906. So from August to October 1906 Bepin Pal was the editor.)

Bepin Pal started the *Bande Mataram* with Rs. 500 in his pocket donated by Haridas Haldar. He called in my help as assistant editor and I gave it. I called a private meeting of the young Nationalist leaders in Calcutta and they agreed to take up the *Bande Mataram* as their party paper with Subodh and Nirod Mullick as the principal financial supporters. A company was projected and formed, but the paper was financed and kept up meanwhile by Subodh. Bepin Pal who was strongly supported by C. R. Das and others remained as editor. Hemendra Prosad Ghose and Shyam Sundar joined the editorial staff but they could not get on with Bepin Babu and were supported by the Mullicks. Finally, Bepin Pal had to retire, I don't remember whether in November or December, probably the latter. I was myself very ill, almost to death, in my father-in-law's house in Serpentine Lane and I did not know what was going on. They put my name as editor on the

paper without my consent, but I spoke to the secretary pretty harshly and had the insertion discontinued. I also wrote a strong letter on the subject to Subodh. From that time Bepin Pal had no connection with the *Bande Mataram*. Somebody said that he resumed his editorship after I was arrested in the Alipore Case. I never heard of that. I was told by Bejoy Chatterjee after I came out from jail that he, Shyam Sundar and Hemendra Prasad had carried on somehow with the paper, but the finances became impossible, so he deliberately wrote an article which made the Government come down on the paper and stop its publication, so that the *Bande Mataram* might end with some *éclat* and in all honour.

(II)

[“*The Sunday Times*”, a weekly paper of Madras, reproduced in its issue of the 17th June, 1945 a news item from the “*Hindustan Standard*” saying that Sri Aurobindo received initiation from Sri Sarada Devi, wife of Sri Ramakrishna, prior to his departure to Chandernagore. This was a completely baseless story and was contradicted by the following statement which appeared in the issue of the 24th June of “*The*

Sunday Times". The statement appeared under the name of the Secretary of the Ashram but was dictated by Sri Aurobindo himself.]

I am authorised by Sri Aurobindo to contradict the statement quoted in your issue of the 17th inst. from the *Hindustan Standard* that he visited Sri Saradamani Devi on the day of his departure to Pondicherry (?) and received from her some kind of *diksha*. There was a story published in a Calcutta monthly sometime ago that on the night of his departure for Chandernagore in February 1910 Sri Aurobindo visited her at Bagbazar Math to receive her blessings, that he was seen off by Sister Nivedita and a Brahmachari of the Math and that he took this step of leaving British India at the advice of Sister Nivedita. All these statements are opposed to the facts and they were contradicted on Sri Aurobindo's behalf by Sri Charu Chandra Dutt in the same monthly.

Sri Aurobindo's departure to Chandernagore was the result of a sudden decision taken on the strength of an *adesh* from above and was carried out rapidly and secretly without consultation with anybody or advice from any quarter. He went straight from the *Dharma* Office to the Ghat—he did not visit the Math, nobody saw him off; a boat was hailed, he entered into it with two young men and proceeded

straight to his destination. His residence at Chandernagore was kept quite secret; it was known only to Srijut Motilal Roy who arranged for his stay and to a few others. Sister Nivedita was confidentially informed the day after his departure and asked to conduct the *Karmayogin* in place of Sri Aurobindo to which she consented. In his passage from Chandernagore to Pondicherry Sri Aurobindo stopped only for two minutes outside College Square to take his trunk from his cousin and paid no visit except to the British Medical Officer to obtain a medical certificate for the voyage. He went straight to the steamship *Dupleix* and next morning was on his way to Pondicherry.

It may be added that neither at this time nor any other did Sri Aurobindo receive any kind of initiation from Sarada Devi; neither did he ever take any formal *diksha* from anyone. He started his sadhana at Baroda in 1904 on his own account after learning from a friend the ordinary formula of pranayama. Afterwards the only help he received was from the Maharashtrian Yogi, Vishnu Bhaskar Lele, who instructed him how to reach complete silence of the mind and immobility of the whole consciousness. This Sri Aurobindo was able to achieve in three days with the result of lasting and massive spiritual realisations opening to him the larger ways of

Yoga. Lele finally told him to put himself entirely into the hands of the Divine within and move only as he was moved and then he would need no instructions either from Lele himself or anyone else. This henceforward became the whole foundation and principle of Sri Aurobindo's sadhana. From that time onward (the beginning of 1909) and through many years of intensive experience at Pondicherry he underwent no spiritual influence from outside.

November, 1945.

(III)

[Suresh Chandra Chakravarti, a disciple of Sri Aurobindo, wrote an article on Sri Aurobindo in the Bengali journal, "Prabasi" (issue of Baisakh 1352 B.S. April, 1945). Ramachandra Majumdar who was on the staff of the "Karmayogin" wrote a reply to this article contradicting what seemed to him to be the wrong statements in S. Chakravarti's article. Majumdar's reply was not only based on wrong memory but also included a number of entirely fictitious statements. The following note was dictated by Sri Aurobindo to correct Majumdar's wrong and fictitious statements;

it was translated into Bengali by Nolini Kanta Gupta who also wrote an article in Bengali (published in "Prabasi" and "Bartika") which was practically a translation of this note.]

In his reply to Suresh Chakravarty's article, my old friend Ramachandra Majumdar congratulates himself on the strength of his memory in old age. His memory is indeed so strong that he not only recollects, very inaccurately, what actually happened, but recalls also and gives body to what never happened at all. His account is so heavily crammed with blunders and accretions that it may provide rich material for an imaginative and romantic biography of Sri Aurobindo in the modern manner but has no other value. It is a pity to have to trample on this fine garden of flowers, but historical and biographical truth has its claim. I shall correct some of the most flagrant errors in this narrative.

First of all, Suresh Chakravarty's article about the journey to Chandernagore confined itself to inaccurate statements of the facts and denied the story of a visit to Sri Sarada Devi in the course of that journey. This point has now been practically conceded for we see that the alleged visit has been transferred to another date a few days earlier. I may say that Suresh's narrative of the facts was brought to the notice of Sri Aurobindo who certified

that it was true both as a whole and in detail.

But now another story has been brought up which is full of confusions and unrealities and is a good example of how myth can be established in place of the truth. Sri Aurobindo never spoke with Sister Nivedita about any case intended to be brought against him by the Government in connection with the murder of Shamsul Alam, for the good reason that no such intention was ever reported to him by anybody. Sister Nivedita never directed or advised him to go into hiding. What actually happened had nothing to do with the departure to Chandernagore. What happened was this: Sister Nivedita on a much earlier occasion informed Sri Aurobindo that the Government intended to deport him and advised him "not to hide", but leave British India and work from outside; Sri Aurobindo did not accept the advice. He said that he would write an "Open Letter" which he thought would make the Government give up its idea; this appeared in the *Karmayogin* under the title "My Last Will and Testament". Afterwards Sister Nivedita told him that it had had the desired effect and there was no more question of deportation.

Sri Aurobindo did not see Sister Nivedita on his way to Chandernagore; this is only a relic of the

now abandoned story of his visit to the Math at Baranagar on that occasion in which it was related that she had seen him off at the Ghat. She knew nothing whatever of his departure to Chandernagore until afterwards when he sent her a message asking her to take up the editing of the *Karmayogin* in his absence. Everything happened very suddenly. Sri Aurobindo, as he has himself related, while at the *Karmayogin* Office, heard of an approaching search and his intended arrest; he suddenly received an *adesh* to go to Chandernagore and carried it out immediately without informing or consulting anybody—even his colleagues and co-workers. Everything was done in fifteen minutes or so and in the utmost secrecy and silence. He followed Ram Majumdar to the Ghat, Suresh Chakravarty and Biren Ghosh following at a little distance; a boat was hailed and the three got in and went off immediately. His stay in Chandernagore also was secret and known only to a few like his later departure to Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo never asked Ram Majumdar to arrange for a hiding place; there was no time for any such arrangement. He went unannounced, relying on some friends in Chandernagore to arrange for his stay. Motilal Roy received him first in his own house, then arranged in other places, allowing only a few to know. This is the

true account of what happened according to Sri Aurobindo's own statement.

The new story now told that Devabrata Bose and Sri Aurobindo both asked to be admitted into the Ramakrishna Mission and Devabrata was accepted but Swami Brahmananda refused to accept Sri Aurobindo, is another myth. Sri Aurobindo never even dreamed of taking Sannyasa or of entering into any established order of Sannyasis. It ought to be well-known to everybody that Sannyasa was never accepted by him as part of his Yoga; he has founded an Ashram in Pondicherry but its members are not Sannyasis, do not wear the ochre garb or practise complete asceticism but are sadhaks of a Yoga of life based on spiritual realisation. This has always been Sri Aurobindo's idea and it was never otherwise. He saw Swami Brahmananda only once when he went on a boat trip to visit the Belur Math; he had then about fifteen minutes' conversation with Swami Brahmananda but there was no talk about spiritual things. The Swami was pre-occupied with a communication from the Government and consulted Sri Aurobindo as to whether there was any need of an answer. Sri Aurobindo said no, and the Swami agreed. After seeing the Math Sri Aurobindo came away and nothing else happened. He never by letter or otherwise com-

municated with Swami Brahmananda before or afterwards and never directly or indirectly asked for admission or for Sannyasa.

There have been hints or statements about Sri Aurobindo taking or asking for initiation from certain quarters about this time. Those who spread these legends seem to be ignorant that at this time he was not a spiritual novice or in need of any initiation or spiritual direction by anybody. Sri Aurobindo had already realised in full two of the four great realisations on which his Yoga and his spiritual philosophy are founded. The first he had gained while meditating with the Maharashtrian Yogi Vishnu Bhaskar Lele at Baroda in January 1908; it was the realisation of the silent, spaceless and timeless Brahman gained after a complete and abiding stillness of the whole consciousness and attended at first by an overwhelming feeling and perception of the total unreality of the world, though this feeling disappeared after his second realisation which was that of the cosmic consciousness and of the Divine as all beings and all that is, which happened in the Alipore jail and of which he has spoken in his speech at Uttarpara. To the other two realisations, that of the supreme Reality with the static and dynamic Brahman as its two aspects and that of the higher planes of consciousness leading to

the Supermind he was already on his way in his meditations in Alipore jail. Moreover, he had accepted from Lele as the principle of his sadhana to rely wholly on the Divine and his guidance alone both for his sadhana and for his outward actions. After that it was impossible for him to put himself under any other guidance and unnecessary to seek help from anyone. In fact Sri Aurobindo never took any formal initiation from anyone; he started his sadhana on his own account by the practice of pranayama and never asked for help except from Lele.

One or two less important points have to be mentioned to show how little reliance can be placed on the details of Ramchandra's narrative. His statement about the automatic writing is only an imaginative inference and in fact quite groundless. Sri Aurobindo totally denies that he used the automatic writing for any kind of moral or other edification of those around him; that would have meant that it was spurious and a sort of a trick, for no writing can be automatic if it is dictated or guided by the writer's conscious mind. The writing was done as an experiment as well as an amusement and nothing else. I may mention here the circumstances under which it was first taken up. Barin had done some very extraordinary automatic writing at Baroda in

a very brilliant and beautiful English style and remarkable for certain predictions which came true and statements of fact which also proved to be true although unknown to the persons concerned or any one else present: there was notably a symbolic anticipation of Lord Curzon's subsequent unexpected departure from India and, again, of the first suppression of the national movement and the greatness of Tilak's attitude amidst the storm; this prediction was given in Tilak's own presence when he visited Sri Aurobindo at Baroda and happened to enter first when the writing was in progress. Sri Aurobindo was very much struck and interested and he decided to find out by practising this kind of writing himself what there was behind it. This is what he was doing in Calcutta. But the results did not satisfy him and after a few further attempts at Pondicherry he dropped these experiments altogether. He did not give the same high value to his efforts as Ramchandra seems to have done, for they had none of those remarkable features of Barin's writings. His final conclusion was that though there are sometimes phenomena which point to the intervention of beings of another plane, not always or often of a high order, the mass of such writings comes from a dramatising element in the subconscious mind; sometimes a brilliant vein in the subli-

minal is struck and then predictions of the future and statements of things known in the present and past come up, but otherwise these writings have not a great value. I may add that Ramchandra's details are incorrect and there was no guide named Theresa, in fact no guide at all, though someone calling himself Theramenes broke in from time to time. The writings came haphazard without any spirit mentor such as some mediums claim to have.

A smaller but more amazing myth presents Sri Aurobindo as a poet in Tamil—and this apparently after only a few days of study. Far from writing Tamil poetry Sri Aurobindo never wrote a single sentence even of Tamil prose and never spoke a single phrase in the Tamil language. He listened for a few days to a Nair from Malabar who read and explained to him articles in a Tamil newspaper; this was a short time before he left Bengal. At Pondicherry he took up the study of Tamil, but he did not go very far and his studies were finally interrupted by his complete retirement.

ABOUT SRI AUROBINDO'S QUESTION OF BECOMING A KING

Ramchandra's whole account is crammed with reckless inaccuracies and unreal details. Srish

Goswami has pointed out in a letter that the astrological writings of Sri Aurobindo of which Ramchandra speaks were only some elementary notes and had no importance. Sri Aurobindo drew them at Baroda to refresh his memory when he was studying the subject with the idea of finding out what truth there might be in astrology. He had never any intention of figuring as an astrologer or writer on astrology. These notes did not form a book and no book of Sri Aurobindo on this subject appeared from the Arya Publishing House.

It is not a fact that Sri Aurobindo's wife, Mrinalini Devi, was residing at S. K. Mitra's house in College Square; Sri Aurobindo himself lived there constantly between the Alipore trial and his departure to French India. But she lived always with the family of Girish Bose, Principal of Bangabasi College. One is unable to understand the meaning of the saying attributed to Sri Aurobindo that he was a man rising to humanity unless we suppose that he was only the animal man rising towards the status of a thinking being; certainly Sri Aurobindo never composed such a resonant and meaningless epigram. If it had been to a Divine Humanity it might have had some meaning but the whole thing sounds unlike what Sri Aurobindo might have said. In fact all that Ramchandra puts into Sri

Aurobindo's mouth is of a character foreign to his habits of speech, e.g., his alleged Shakespearean and Polonius-like recommendation to Ramchandra himself while departing to Chandernagore. He may have enjoined silence on Ramchandra but not in that flowery language.

This should be enough; it is unnecessary to deal with all the inaccuracies and imaginations. But I think I have said enough to show that anyone wanting the truth about Sri Aurobindo would do well to avoid any reliance on Ramchandra's narrative. It can be described in the phrase of Goethe, "poetic fictions and truths", for the element of truth is small and that of poetic fiction stupendous. It is like the mass of ale to the modicum of bread in Falstaff's tavern bill. In fact it is almost the whole.

1945

(IV)

[*A French lady, interested in Indian spirituality, published a book in French on Sister Nivedita's life—"Nivedita, fille de l'Inde"—in which she made some statements about Sri Aurobindo and his contacts with Sister Nivedita. A French disciple of Sri Aurobindo, who brought these statements to his notice received from him the following reply.*]

The account which seems to have been given to X and recorded by her on pages 317-324 of her book is, I am compelled to say, fiction and romance with no foundation in actual facts. I spent the first part of my imprisonment in Alipore jail in a solitary cell and again after the assassination of Noren Gosain to the last days of the trial when all the Alipore case prisoners were similarly lodged each in his own cell. In between for a short period we were all put together. There is no truth behind the statement that while I was meditating they gathered around me, that I recited the Gita to them and they sang the verses, or that they put questions to me on spiritual matters and received instructions from me; the whole description is quite fanciful. Only a few of the prisoners had been known to me before I met them in prison; only a few who had been with Barin had practised sadhana and these were connected with Barin and would have turned to him for any help, not to me. I was carrying on my Yoga during these days, learning to do so in the midst of much noise and clamour but apart and in silence and without any participation of the others in it. My Yoga begun in 1904 had always been personal and apart; those around me knew I was a sadhak but they knew little more as I kept all that went on in me to myself.

It was only after my release that for the first time I spoke at Uttarpara publicly about my spiritual experiences. Until I went to Pondicherry I took no disciples; with those who accompanied me or joined me in Pondicherry I had at first the relation of friends and companions rather than of a guru and disciples; it was on the ground of politics that I had come to know them and not on the spiritual ground. Afterwards only there was a gradual development of spiritual relations until the Mother came back from Japan and the Ashram was founded or rather founded itself in 1926. I began my Yoga in 1904 without a guru; in 1908 I received important help from a Mahratta Yogi and discovered the foundations of my sadhana; but from that time till the Mother came to India I received no spiritual help from anyone else. My sadhana before and afterwards was not founded upon books but upon personal experiences that crowded on me from within. But in the jail I had the *Gita* and the *Upanishads* with me, practised the Yoga of the *Gita* and meditated with the help of the *Upanishads*; these were the only books from which I found guidance; the *Veda* which I first began to read long afterwards in Pondicherry rather confirmed what experiences I already had than was any guide to my sadhana. I sometimes turned to the *Gita* for

light when there was a question or a difficulty and usually received help or an answer from it, but there were no such happenings in connection with the *Gita* as are narrated in the book. It is a fact that I was hearing constantly the voice of Vivekananda speaking to me for a fortnight in the jail in my solitary meditation and felt his presence, but this had nothing to do with the alleged circumstances narrated in the book, circumstances that never took place, nor had it anything to do with the *Gita*. The voice spoke only on a special and limited but very important field of spiritual experience and it ceased as soon as it had finished saying all that it had to say on that subject.

Then about my relations with Sister Nivedita—they were purely in the field of politics. Spirituality or spiritual matters did not enter into them and I do not remember anything passing between us on these subjects when I was with her. Once or twice she showed the spiritual side of her but she was then speaking to someone else who had come to see her while I was there. The whole account about my staying with her for 24 hours and all that is said to have passed between us then is sheer romance and does not contain a particle of fact. I met Sister Nivedita first at Baroda when she came to give some lectures there. I went to receive her at the station

and to take her to the house assigned to her; I also accompanied her to an interview she had sought with the Maharaja of Baroda. She had heard of me as one who "believed in strength and was a worshipper of Kali" by which she meant that she had heard of me as a revolutionary. I knew of her already because I had read and admired her book *Kali the Mother*. It was in these days that we formed our friendship. After I had started my revolutionary work in Bengal through certain emissaries, I went there personally to see and arrange things myself. I found a number of small groups of revolutionaries that had recently sprung into existence but all scattered and acting without reference to each other. I tried to unite them under a single organisation with the barrister P. Mitra as the leader of the revolution in Bengal and a central council of five persons, one of them being Nivedita. The work under P. Mitra spread enormously and finally contained tens of thousands of young men and the spirit of revolution spread by Barin's paper *Yugantar* became general in the young generation; but during my absence at Baroda the council ceased to exist as it was impossible to keep up agreement among the many groups. I had no occasion to meet Nivedita after that until I settled in Bengal as Principal of the National College and the chief editorial writer of the *Bande Mataram*.

By that time I had become one of the leaders of the public movement known first as extremism, then as nationalism, but this gave me no occasion to meet her except once or twice at the Congress, as my collaboration with her was solely in the secret revolutionary field. I was busy with my work and she with hers, and no occasion arose for consultations or decisions about the conduct of the revolutionary movement. Later on I began to make time to go and see her occasionally at Bagbazar.

In one of these visits she informed me that the Government had decided to deport me and she wanted me to go into secrecy or to leave British India and act from outside so as to avoid interruption of my work. There was no question at that time of danger to her; in spite of her political views she had friendly relations with high Government officials and there was no question of her arrest. I told her that I did not think it necessary to accept her suggestion; I would write an open letter in the *Karmayogin* which, I thought, would prevent this action by the Government. This was done and on my next visit to her she told me that my move had been entirely successful and the idea of deportation had been dropped. The departure to Chandernagore happened later and there was no connection between the two incidents which have been hopelessly

confused together in the account in the book. The incidents related there have no foundation in fact. It was not Gonen Maharaj who informed me of the impending search and arrest, but a young man on the staff of the *Karmayogin*, Ramchandra Mazumdar, whose father had been warned that in a day or two the *Karmayogin* Office would be searched and myself arrested. There have been many legends spread about on this matter and it was even said that I was to be prosecuted for participation in the murder in the High Court of Shamsul Alam, a prominent member of the C.I.D., and that Sister Nivedita sent for me and informed me and we discussed what was to be done and my disappearance was the result. I never heard of any such proposed prosecution and there was no discussion of the kind; the prosecution intended and afterwards started was for sedition only. Sister Nivedita knew nothing of these new happenings till after I reached Chandernagore. I did not go to her house or see her; it is wholly untrue that she and Gonen Maharaj came to see me off at the Ghat. There was no time to inform her; for almost immediately I received a command from above to go to Chandernagore and within ten minutes I was at the Ghat; a boat was hailed and I was on my way with two young men to Chandernagore. It was a common Ganges boat

rowed by two boatmen, and all the picturesque details about the French boat and the disappearing lights are pure romance. I sent someone from the office to Nivedita to inform her and to ask her to take up editing of the *Karmayogin* in my absence. She consented and in fact from this time onward until the suspension of the paper she had the whole conduct of it; I was absorbed in my sadhana and sent no contributions nor were there any articles over my signature. There was never my signature to any articles in the *Karmayogin* except twice only, the last being the occasion for the prosecution which failed. There was no arrangement for my staying in Chandernagore at a place selected by Nivedita. I went without previous notice to anybody and was received by Motilal Roy who made secret arrangements for my stay; nobody except himself and a few friends knew where I was. The warrant of arrest was suspended, but after a month or so I used a manœuvre to push the police into open action; the warrant was launched and a prosecution commenced against the printer in my absence which ended in acquittal in the High Court. I was already on my way to Pondicherry where I arrived on April 4. There also I remained in secrecy in the house of a prominent citizen until the acquittal, after which I announced my presence in French

India. These are all the essential facts and they leave no room for the alleged happenings related in the book. It is best that you should communicate my statement of facts to X so that she may be able to make the necessary corrections or omissions in a future edition and remove this wrong information which would otherwise seriously detract from the value of her life of Nivedita.

13-9-1946

II

BEGINNINGS OF YOGA

An Early Experience

Q: S says that it is written somewhere that you had a realisation in 1890. Is it true?

A: A realisation in 1890? It does not seem possible. There was something, though I was not doing Yoga and knew nothing about it, in the year of my departure from England; I don't remember which it was but probably 1892-93. I don't remember anything special in 1890. Where did he see this written?

22-8-1936

The First Concrete Realisation

In a more deep and spiritual sense a concrete realisation is that which makes the thing realised more real, dynamic, intimately present to the con-

sciousness than any physical thing can be. Such a realisation of the personal Divine or of the impersonal Brahman or of the Self does not usually come at the beginning of a sadhana or in the first years or for many years. It comes so to a very few; mine came fifteen years after my first pre-yogic experience in London and in the fifth year after I started Yoga. That I consider extraordinarily quick, an express train speed almost, although there may no doubt have been several quicker achievements. But to expect and demand it so soon would betoken in the eyes of any experienced Yogi or sadhak as a rather rash and abnormal impatience. Most would say that a slow development is the best one can hope for in the first years and only when the nature is ready and fully concentrated towards the Divine can the definitive experience come.

June, 1934

Flow of Experience by Divine Grace

By the way, what is this story about my four or five hours' concentration a day for several years before anything came down? Such a thing never happened if by concentration you mean laborious

meditation. What I did was four or five hours a day Pranayam—which is quite another matter. And what flow do you speak of? The flow of poetry came down while I was doing Pranayam, not some years afterwards. If it is the flow of experience, that did come after some years, but after I had stopped the Pranayam for a long time and was doing nothing and did not know what to do or where to turn once all my efforts had failed. And it came not as a result of years of Pranayam or concentration, but in a ridiculously easy way, by the grace either of a temporary guru (but it was not that, for he was himself bewildered by it) or by the grace of the eternal Brahman and afterwards by the grace of Mahakali and Krishna. So don't try to turn me into an argument against the Divine, that attempt will be perfectly ineffective.

22-I-1936

Realisation and Purification

(I)

I do not know what K said or in which article, I do not have it with me. But if the statement is that

nobody can have a successful meditation or realise anything till he is pure and perfect, I fail to follow it: it contradicts my own experience. I have always had realisation by meditation first and the purification started afterwards as a result. I have seen many get important, even fundamental realisations by meditation who could not be said to have a great inner development. Are all Yogis who have meditated with effect and had great realisations in their inner consciousness perfect in their nature? It does not look like it to me. I am unable to believe in absolute generalisations in this field, because the development of spiritual consciousness is an exceedingly vast and complex affair in which all sorts of things can happen and one might almost say that for each man it is different according to his nature and that the one thing that is essential is the inner call and aspiration and the perseverance to follow always after it, no matter how long it takes, what are the difficulties or impediments, because nothing else will satisfy the soul within us.

(2)

If absolute surrender, faith, etc. from the beginning were essential for Yoga, then nobody could do

it. I myself could not have done it if such a condition had been demanded of me....

8-3-1935

Glimpse of Spiritual Possibility

Q: Is it true that only those who had, before beginning their sadhana, a clear knowledge of their spiritual possibility through a definite glimpse received by the Divine Grace are able to stick to their path till the end, while those who had no such glimpse may get some experience but will not be able to stick to their sadhana ?

A: At least I had no such glimpse before I started Yoga. I can't say about others—perhaps some had—but the glimpse could only bring faith, it could not possibly bring knowledge; knowledge comes by Yoga, not before it.

I repeat that all one needs to know is whether the soul in one has been moved to the Yoga or not.

5-5-1933

Four Years of Striving

It is not that there is anything peculiar in you

in these difficulties; every sadhak entering the way has to get over similar impediments. It took me four years of inner striving to find a real way, even though the divine help was with me all the time, and even then, it seemed to come by an accident; and it took me ten more years of intense Yoga under a supreme inner guidance to trace it out and that was because I had my past and the world's past to assimilate and overpass before I could find and found the future.

5-5-1932

The First Advaitic Experience

I think you have made too much play with my phrase "an accident", ignoring the important qualification, "it *seemed* to come by an accident". After four years of Pranayam and other practices on my own, with no other result than an increased health and outflow of energy, some psycho-physical phenomena, a great outflow of poetic creation, a limited power of subtle sight (luminous patterns and figures, etc.) mostly with the waking eye, I had a complete arrest and was at a loss. At this juncture I was induced to meet a man without fame whom I

did not know, a bhakta with a limited mind but with some experience and evocative power. We sat together and I followed with an absolute fidelity what he instructed me to do, not myself in the least understanding where he was leading me or where I was myself going. The first result was a series of tremendously powerful experiences and radical changes of consciousness which he had never intended—for they were Adwaitic and Vedantic and he was against Adwaita Vedanta—and which were quite contrary to my own ideas, for they made me see with a stupendous intensity the world as a cinematographic play of vacant forms in the impersonal universality of the Absolute Brahman. The final upshot was that he was made by a Voice within him to hand me over to the Divine within me enjoining an absolute surrender to its will—a principle or rather a seed force to which I kept unswervingly and increasingly till it led me through all the mazes of an incalculable Yogic development bound by no single rule or style or dogma or shastra to where and what I am now and towards what shall be hereafter. Yet he understood so little what he was doing that when he met me a month or two later, he was alarmed, tried to undo what he had done and told me that it was not the Divine but the devil that had got hold of me. Does not all

that justify my phrase "it seemed to come by an accident"? But my meaning is that the ways of the Divine are not like those of the human mind or according to our patterns and it is impossible to judge them or to lay down for Him what He shall or shall not do, for the Divine knows better than we can know. If we admit the Divine at all, both true reason and bhakti seem to me to be at one in demanding implicit faith and surrender. I do not see how without them there can be *avyabhicāriṇī bhakti* (one-pointed adoration).

May, 1932

Deficiencies of the Human Guru

It is not the human defects of the Guru that can stand in the way when there is the psychic opening, confidence and surrender. The Guru is the channel or the representation or the manifestation of the Divine, according to the measure of his personality or his attainment; but whatever he is, it is the Divine that one opens to, in opening to him; and if something is determined by the power of the channel, more is determined by the inherent and intrinsic attitude of the receiving consciousness,

an element that comes out in the surface mind as simple trust or direct unconditional self-giving, and once that is there, the essential things can be gained even from one who seems to others than the disciple an inferior spiritual source, and the rest will grow up in the sadhak of itself, by the Grace of the Divine, even if the human being in the Guru cannot give it. It is this that K appears to have done perhaps from the first; but in most nowadays this attitude seems to come with difficulty, after much hesitation and trouble. In my own case, I owe the first decisive turn of my inner life to one who was infinitely inferior to me in intellect, education, capacity and by no means spiritually perfect or supreme; but having seen a power behind him and decided to turn there for help I gave myself entirely into his hands and followed with an automatic passivity the guidance. He himself was astonished and said to others that he had never met anyone before who could surrender himself so absolutely and without reserve or question to the guidance of the helper. The result was a series of transmuting experiences of such a radical character that he was unable to follow and had to tell me to give myself up in future to the Guide within with the same completeness of surrender as I had shown to the human channel. I give this example to show how

these things work; it is not in the calculated way the human reason wants to lay down, but by a more mysterious and greater law.

23-3-1932

The Experience of Nirvana

I have never said that things (in life) are harmonious now—on the contrary, with the human consciousness as it is harmony is impossible. It is always what I have told you, that the human consciousness is defective and simply impossible—and that is why I strive for a higher consciousness to come and set right the disturbed balance. I don't want to give you Nirvana (on paper) immediately because Nirvana only leads up to Harmony in my communication. I am glad you are getting converted to silence, and even Nirvana is not without its uses—in my case it was the first positive spiritual experience and it made possible all the rest of the sadhana; but as to the positive way to get these things, I don't know if your mind is quite ready to proceed with it. There are in fact several ways. My own way was by rejection of thought. "Sit down," I was told, "look and you will see that your thoughts

come into you from outside. Before they enter, fling them back." I sat down and looked and saw to my astonishment that it was so; I saw and felt concretely the thought approaching as if to enter through or above the head and was able to push it back concretely before it came inside.

In three days—really in one—my mind became full of an eternal silence—it is still there. But that I don't know how many people can do. One (not a disciple—I had no disciples in those days) asked me how to do Yoga. I said: "Make your mind quiet first." He did and his mind became quite silent and empty. Then he rushed to me saying: "My brain is empty of thoughts, I cannot think. I am becoming an idiot." He did not pause to look and see where these thoughts he uttered were coming from! Nor did he realise that one who is already an idiot cannot become one. Anyhow I was not patient in those days and I dropped him and let him lose his miraculously achieved silence.

The usual way, the easiest if one can manage it at all, is to *call down* the silence from above you into the brain, mind and body.

Freedom and Mastery of Mind

All developed mental men, those who get beyond the average, have in one way or other, or at least at certain times and for certain purposes to separate the two parts of the mind, the active part, which is a factory of thoughts and the quiet masterful part which is at once a Witness and a Will, observing them, judging, rejecting, eliminating, accepting, ordering corrections and changes, the Master in the House of Mind, capable of self-empire, *sāmrājya*.

The Yogi goes still further,—he is not only a master there but even while in mind in a way, he gets out of it as it were, and stands above or quite back from it and free. For him the image of the factory of thoughts is no longer quite valid; for he sees that thoughts come from outside, from the universal Mind, or universal Nature, sometimes formed and distinct, sometimes unformed and then they are given shape somewhere in us. The principal business of our mind is either a response of acceptance or a refusal to these thought-waves (as also vital waves, subtle physical energy waves) or this giving a personal-mental form to thought-stuff (or vital movements) from the environing Nature-Force. It was my great debt to Lele that he showed

me this. "Sit in meditation," he said, "but do not think, look only at your mind; you will see thoughts *coming into it*; before they can enter throw these away from your mind till your mind is capable of entire silence". I had never heard before of thoughts coming visibly into the mind from outside, but I did not think either of questioning the truth or the possibility, I simply sat down and did it. In a moment my mind became silent as a windless air on a high mountain summit and then I saw one thought and then another coming in a concrete way from outside; I flung them away before they could enter and take hold of the brain and in three days I was free. From that moment, in principle, the mental being in me became a free Intelligence, a universal Mind, not limited to the narrow circle of personal thought as a labourer in a thought factory, but a receiver of knowledge from all the hundred realms of being and free to choose what it willed in this vast sight-empire and thought-empire. I mention this only to emphasise that the possibilities of the mental being are not limited and that it can be the free Witness and Master in its own house. It is not to say that everybody can do it in the way I did it and with the same rapidity of the decisive movement (for, of course, the latter fullest developments of this new untrammelled mental

power took time, many years) but a progressive freedom and mastery of one's mind is perfectly within the possibilities of anyone who has the faith and the will to undertake it.

5-8-1932

Silence of Mind by Descent of Stillness

I find nothing to object to in Prof. Sorley's comment on the still, bright and clear mind, for it adequately indicates the process by which the mind makes itself ready for the reflection of the higher Truth in its undisturbed surface or substance. One thing perhaps needs to be kept in view—this pure stillness of the mind is always the required condition, the desideratum, but to bring it about there are more ways than one. It is not, for instance, only by an effort of the mind itself to get clear of all intrusive emotion or passion or of its own characteristic vibrations or of the obscuring fumes of a physical inertia which brings about the sleep or torpor of the mind instead of its wakeful silence that the thing can be done—for this is only the ordinary process of the Yogic path of knowledge. It can happen also by a descent from above of a great

spiritual stillness imposing silence on the mind and heart and the life stimuli and the physical reflexes. A sudden descent of this kind or a series of descents accumulative in force and efficacy is a well-known phenomenon of spiritual experience. Or, again, one may start a process of one kind or another for the purpose which would normally mean a long labour and be seized, even at the outset, by a rapid intervention or manifestation of the Silence with an effect out of all proportion to the means used at the beginning. One commences with a method, but the work is taken up by a Grace from above, from That to which one aspires or an irruption of the infinitudes of the Spirit. It was in this last way that I myself came by the mind's absolute silence, unimaginable to me before I had its actual experience.

*Silent Brahman and Action of
Divine Force*

(1)

Realisation of the silent, inactive Brahman is no bar to the dynamic side of the Yoga, often it is the first step. One must not associate it with attachment

to inertia. The silent Brahman is attached to nothing. Your mind is associated with inertia and attached to it.

Work itself is no solution, the spirit behind the work is important. The real remedy is to open oneself to the Force. When one gets free through the silent Brahman, one does not go back to the old way of work. By this liberation one becomes free from the ego, one becomes an instrument of the Divine Force by receiving the Force and feels it working; then inertia goes away and work in a new way becomes possible. Until that can be done, one has to work in the ordinary way. But becoming an instrument of the Divine is the proper way.

I had the realisation of sublime Nirvana first. There was complete *cittavṛtti nirodha*, entire silence. Then came the experience of action, not my own, but from above. One has to grow into it unless it comes easily.

26-6-1946

(2)

What you describe is not at all a drawing away of life-energy; it is simply the effect of voidness and stillness caused in the lower parts by the conscious-

ness being located above. It is quite consistent with action, only one must get accustomed to the idea of the possibility of action under these conditions. In a greater state of emptiness I carried on a daily newspaper and made a dozen speeches in the course of three or four days—but I did not manage that in any way; it happened. The force made the body do the work without any inner activity. The drawing away of the life-energy leaves the body lifeless, helpless, empty and impotent, but it is attended by no experience except a great suffering.

13-5-1936

(3)

It ought to be possible to read with the inner consciousness looking on and, as it were, seeing at the act of reading. In the condition of absolute inner silence I was making speeches and conducting a newspaper but all that got itself done without any thought entering my mind or the silence being in the least disturbed or diminished.

27-10-1934

*The Real Difficulty*¹

Sri Aurobindo has no remarks to make on Huxley's comments with which he is in entire agreement. But in the phrase "To its heights we can always reach", very obviously "we" does not refer to humanity in general but to those who have a sufficiently developed inner spiritual life. It is probable that Sri Aurobindo was thinking of his own experience. After three years of spiritual effort with only minor results he was shown by a Yogi the way to silence his mind. This he succeeded in doing entirely in two or three days by following the method shown. There was an entire silence of thought and feeling and all the ordinary movements of consciousness except the perception and recognition of things around without any accompanying concept or other reaction. The sense of ego disappeared

¹ These remarks were dictated by Sri Aurobindo *a propos* the phrase "To its heights we can always reach" occurring in the following passage in *The Life Divine* quoted and commented upon by Aldous Huxley in his book, *The Perennial Philosophy*, (p. 74):

"The touch of Earth is always reinigorating to the son of Earth, even when he seeks a supraphysical Knowledge. It may even be said that the supraphysical can only be really mastered in its fullness—to its heights we can always reach—when we keep our feet firmly on the physical. 'Earth is His footing', says the Upanishad whenever it images the Self that manifests in the universe." (Vol. I, chap. II.)

and the movements of the ordinary life as well as speech and action were carried on by some habitual activity of Prakriti alone which was not felt as belonging to oneself. But the perception which remained saw all things as utterly unreal; this sense of unreality was overwhelming and universal. Only some undefinable Reality was perceived as true which was beyond space and time and unconnected with any cosmic activity, but yet was met wherever one turned. This condition remained unimpaired for several months and even when the sense of unreality disappeared and there was a return to participation in the world-consciousness, the inner peace and freedom which resulted from this realisation remained permanently behind all surface movements and the essence of the realisation itself was not lost. At the same time an experience intervened: something else than himself took up his dynamic activity and spoke and acted through him but without any personal thought or initiative. What this was remained unknown until Sri Aurobindo came to realise the dynamic side of the Brahman, the Ishwara and felt himself moved by that in all his sadhana and action. These realisations and others which followed upon them, such as that of the Self in all and all in the Self and all as the Self, the Divine in all and all in the Divine, are the heights

to which Sri Aurobindo refers and to which he says we can always rise; for they presented to him no long or obstinate difficulty. The only real difficulty which took decades of spiritual effort to carry out towards completeness was to apply the spiritual knowledge utterly to the world and to the surface psychological and outer life and to effect its transformation both on the higher levels of Nature and on the ordinary mental, vital and physical levels down to the subconsciousness and the basic Inconscience and up to the supreme Truth-consciousness or Supermind in which alone the dynamic transformation could be entirely integral and absolute.

4-11-1946

Yogic Experience and Scientific Objections

(1)

Your bells etc., mentioned by you as recent experiences were already enumerated as long ago as the time of the Upanishads as signs accompanying the opening to the larger consciousness, *brahmanyabhi-vyaktikarāṇi yoge*. If I remember right your sparks

come in the same list. The fact has been recorded again and again in yogic literature. I had the same experience hundreds of times in the earlier part of my sadhana. So you see you are in very honourable company in this matter and need not trouble yourself about the objections of physical science.

13-3-1931

(2)

I remember when I first began to see inwardly (and outwardly also with the open eye), a scientific friend of mine began to talk of after-images—"these are only after-images"! I asked him whether after-images remained before the eye for two minutes at a time—he said, "no", to his knowledge only for a few seconds; I also asked him whether one could get after-images of things not around one or even not existing upon this earth, since they had other shapes, another character, other hues, contours and a very different dynamism, life-movements and values—he could not reply in the affirmative. That is how these so-called scientific explanations break out as soon as you pull them out of their cloudland of

mental theory and face them with the actual phenomena they pretend to decipher.

19-2-1932

(3)

I suppose I have had myself an even more completely European education than you, and I have had too my period of agnostic denial, but from the moment I looked at these things I could never take the attitude of doubt and disbelief which was for so long fashionable in Europe. Abnormal, otherwise supraphysical experiences and powers, occult or yogic, have always seemed to me something perfectly natural and credible. Consciousness in its very nature could not be limited by the ordinary physical human-animal consciousness, it must have the other ranges. Yogic or occult powers are no more supernatural or incredible than is supernatural or incredible the power to write a great poem or compose great music; few people can do it, as things are,—not even one in a million; for poetry and music come from the inner being and to write or to compose true and great things one has to have the passage clear between the outer mind and something

in the inner being. That is why you got the poetic power as soon as you began Yoga,—yogic force made the passage clear. It is the same with yogic consciousness and its powers; the thing is to get the passage clear,—for they are already within you. Of course, the first thing is to believe, aspire and, with the true urge within, make the endeavour.

(4)

You ask me whether you have to give up your predilection for testing before accepting and to accept everything in Yoga *a priori*—and by testing you mean testing by the ordinary reason. The only answer I can give to that is that the experiences of Yoga belong to an inner domain and go according to a law of their own, have their own method of perception, criteria and all the rest of it which are neither those of the domain of the physical senses nor of the domain of rational or scientific enquiry. Just as scientific enquiry passes beyond that of the physical senses and enters the domain of the infinite and infinitesimal about which the senses can say nothing and test nothing—for one cannot see and touch an electron or know by the evidence of the sense-mind whether it exists or not or decide by that

evidence whether the earth really turns round the sun and not rather the sun round the earth as our senses and all our physical experience daily tell us—so the spiritual search passes beyond the domain of scientific or rational enquiry and it is impossible by the aid of the ordinary positive reason to test the data of spiritual experience and decide whether those things exist or not or what is their law and nature. As in Science, so here you have to accumulate experience on experience, following faithfully the methods laid down by the Guru or by the systems of the past, you have to develop an intuitive discrimination which compares the experiences, see what they mean, how far and in what field each is valid, what is the place of each in the whole, how it can be reconciled or related with others that at first might seem to contradict it, etc., etc., until you can move with a secure knowledge in the vast field of spiritual phenomena. That is the only way to test spiritual experience. I have myself tried the other method and I have found it absolutely incapable and inapplicable. On the other hand, if you are not prepared to go through all that yourself,—as few can do except those of extraordinary spiritual stature—you have to accept the leading of a Master, as in Science you accept a teacher instead of going through the whole field of Science and its experimentation

all by yourself—at least until you have accumulated sufficient experience and knowledge. If that is accepting things *a priori*, well, you have to accept *a priori*. For I am unable to see by what valid tests you propose to make the ordinary reason the judge of what is beyond it.

You quote the sayings of V or X. I would like to know before assigning a value to these utterances what they actually did for the testing of their spiritual perceptions and experiences. How did V test the value of his spiritual experiences—some of them not easily credible to the ordinary positive mind any more than the miracles attributed to some famous Yogis? I know nothing about X, but what were his tests and how did he apply them? What are his methods? his criteria? It seems to me that no ordinary mind will accept the apparition of Buddha out of a wall or the half hour's talk with Hayagriva as valid facts by any kind of testing. It would either have to accept them *a priori* or on the sole evidence of V, which comes to the same thing, or to reject them *a priori* as hallucinations or mere mental images accompanied in one case by an auditive hallucination. I fail to see how it could "test" them. Or how was I to test by the ordinary mind my experience of Nirvana? To what conclusion could I come about it by the aid of the ordinary

positive reason? How could I test its validity? I am at a loss to imagine. I did the only thing I could—to accept it as a strong and valid truth of experience, let it have its full play and produce its full experimental consequences until I had sufficient Yogic knowledge to put it in its place. Finally, how without inner knowledge or experience can you or any one else test the inner knowledge and experience of others?

18-11-1934

III

HIS PATH AND OTHER PATHS

This-Worldliness, Other-Worldliness and Sri Aurobindo's Yoga

ONE thing I feel I must say in connection with your remark about the soul of India and X's observation about "this stress on this-worldliness to the exclusion of other-worldliness". I do not quite understand in what connection his remark was made or what he meant by this-worldliness, but I feel it necessary to state my own position in the matter. My own life and my Yoga have always been since my coming to India both this-worldly and other-worldly without any exclusiveness on either side. All human interests are, I suppose, this-worldly and most of them have entered into my mental field and some, like politics, into my life, but at the same time, since I set foot on the Indian soil on the Apollo Bunder in Bombay, I began to have spiritual experiences, but these were not divorced from this world but had an inner and infinite bearing on it,

such as a feeling of the Infinite pervading material space and the Immanent inhabiting material objects and bodies. At the same time, I found myself entering supraphysical worlds and planes with influences and an effect from them upon the material plane, so I could make no sharp divorce or irreconcilable opposition between what I have called the two ends of existence and all that lies between them. For me all is Brahman and I find the Divine everywhere. Everyone has the right to throw away this-worldliness and choose other-worldliness only, and if he finds peace by that choice he is greatly blessed. I, personally, have not found it necessary to do this in order to have peace. In my Yoga also I found myself moved to include both worlds in my purview—the spiritual and the material—and to try to establish the Divine Consciousness and the Divine Power in men's hearts and earthly life, not for a personal salvation only but for a life divine here. This seems to me as spiritual an aim as any and the fact of this life taking up earthly pursuits and earthly things into its scope cannot, I believe, tarnish its spirituality or alter its Indian character. This at least has always been my view and experience of the reality and nature of the world and things and the Divine: it seemed to me as nearly as possible the integral truth about them and I have therefore spoken of the

pursuit of it as the integral Yoga. Everyone is, of course, free to reject and disbelieve in this kind of integrality or to believe in the spiritual necessity of an entire other-worldliness altogether, but that would make the exercise of my Yoga impossible. My Yoga can include indeed a full experience of the other worlds, the plane of the Supreme Spirit and the other planes in between and their possible effects upon our life and the material world; but it will be quite possible to insist only on the realisation of the Supreme Being or Ishwara even in one aspect, Shiva, Krishna as Lord of the world and Master of ourselves and our works or else the Universal Sachchidananda, and attain to the essential results of this Yoga and afterwards to proceed from them to the integral results if one accepted the ideal of the divine life and this material world conquered by the Spirit. It is this view and experience of things and of the truth of existence that enabled me to write *The Life Divine* and *Savitri*. The realisation of the Supreme, the Ishwara, is certainly the essential thing; but to approach Him with love and devotion and *bhakti*, to serve Him with one's works and to know Him, not necessarily by the intellectual cognition, but in a spiritual experience, is also essential in the path of the integral Yoga.

Yoga of Divine Life

You have apparently a call and may be fit for Yoga; but there are different paths and each has a different aim and end before it. It is common to all the paths to conquer the desires, to put aside the ordinary relations of life, and to try to pass from uncertainty to everlasting certitude. One may also try to conquer dream and sleep, thirst and hunger, etc. But it is no part of my Yoga to have nothing to do with the world or with life or to kill the senses or entirely inhibit their action. It is the object of my Yoga to transform life by bringing down into it the Light, Power and Bliss of the divine Truth and its dynamic certitudes. This Yoga is not a Yoga of world-shunning asceticism, but of divine life. Your object, on the other hand, can only be gained by entering into Samadhi and ceasing in it from all connection with world-existence.

*The Way Out and the Way to
Conquer*

The universe is certainly or has been up to now in appearance a rough and wasteful game with the

dice of chance loaded in favour of the Powers of darkness, the Lords of obscurity, falsehood, death and suffering. But we have to take it as it is and find out—if we reject the way out of the old sages—the way to conquer. Spiritual experience shows that there is behind it all a wide terrain of equality, peace, calm, freedom, and it is only by getting into it that we can have the eye that sees and hope to gain the power that conquers.

Mayavada, Nirvana and Sri Aurobindo's Yoga

When I wrote in the *Arya*, I was setting forth an overmind view of things to the mind and putting it in mental terms, that was why I had sometimes to use logic. For in such a work—mediating between the intellect and the supra-intellectual—logic has a place, though it cannot have the chief place it occupies in purely mental philosophies. The Mayavadin himself labours to establish his point of view or his experience by a rigorous logical reasoning. Only, when it comes to an explanation of Maya, he, like the scientist dealing with Nature, can do no more than arrange and organise his ideas of the process of this universal mystification; he cannot explain how

or why his illusionary mystifying Maya came into existence. He can only say, "Well, but it is there."

Of course, it is there. But the question is, first, what is it? Is it really an illusionary Power and nothing else, or is the Mayavadin's idea of it a mistaken first view, a mental imperfect reading, even perhaps itself an illusion? And next, "Is illusion the sole or the highest Power which the Divine Consciousness or Superconsciousness possesses?" The Absolute is an absolute Truth free from Maya, otherwise liberation would not be possible. Has then the supreme and absolute Truth no other active Power than a power of falsehood and with it, no doubt, for the two go together, a power of dissolving or disowning the falsehood,—which is yet there for ever? I suggested that this sounded a little queer. But queer or not, if it is so, it is so—for, as you point out, the Ineffable cannot be subjected to the laws of logic. But who is to decide whether it is so? You will say, those who get there. But get where? To the Perfect and the Highest, *pūrṇam param*? Is the Mayavadin's featureless Brahman that Perfect, that Complete—is it the very Highest? Is there not or can there not be a higher than that highest, *parāt param*? That is not a question of logic, it is a question of spiritual fact, of a supreme and complete experience. The solution of the matter

must rest not upon logic, but upon a growing, ever heightening, widening spiritual experience—an experience which must of course include or have passed through that of Nirvana and Maya, otherwise it would not be complete and would have no decisive value.

Now to reach Nirvana was the first radical result of my own Yoga. It threw me suddenly into a condition above and without thought, unstained by any mental or vital movement; there was no ego, no real world—only when one looked through the immobile senses, something perceived or bore upon its sheer silence a world of empty forms, materialised shadows without true substance. There was no One or many even, only just absolutely That, featureless, relationless, sheer, indescribable, unthinkable, absolute, yet supremely real and solely real. This was no mental realisation nor something glimpsed somewhere above,—no abstraction,—it was positive, the only positive reality—although not a spatial physical world, pervading, occupying or rather flooding and drowning this semblance of a physical world, leaving no room or space for any reality but itself, allowing nothing else to seem at all actual, positive or substantial. I cannot say there was anything exhilarating or rapturous in the experience, as it then came to me,—(the ineffable

Ananda I had years afterwards),—but what it brought was an inexpressible Peace, a stupendous silence, an infinity of release and freedom. I lived in that Nirvana day and night before it began to admit other things into itself or modify itself at all, and the inner heart of experience, a constant memory of it and its power to return remained until in the end it began to disappear into a greater Super-consciousness from above. But meanwhile realisation added itself to realisation and fused itself with this original experience. At an early stage the aspect of an illusionary world gave place to one in which illusion¹ is only a small surface phenomenon with an immense Divine Reality behind it and a supreme Divine Reality above it and an intense Divine Reality in the heart of everything that had seemed at first only a cinematic shape or shadow. And this was no reimprisonment in the senses, no diminution or fall from supreme experience, it came rather as a constant heightening and widening of the Truth; it was the spirit that saw objects, not the senses, and the Peace, the Silence, the freedom in Infinity remained always with the world or all worlds

¹ In fact it is not an illusion in the sense of an imposition of something baseless and unreal on the consciousness, but a misinterpretation by the conscious mind and sense and a falsifying misuse of manifested existence.

only as a continuous incident in the timeless eternity of the Divine.

Now, that is the whole trouble in my approach to Mayavada. Nirvana in my liberated consciousness turned out to be the beginning of my realisation, a first step towards the complete thing, not the sole true attainment possible or even a culminating finale. It came unasked, unsought for, though quite welcome. I had no least idea about it before, no aspiration towards it, in fact my aspiration was towards just the opposite, spiritual power to help the world and to do my work in it, yet it came—without even a “May I come in” or a “By your leave”. It just happened and settled in as if for all eternity or as if it had been really there always. And then it slowly grew into something not less but greater than its first self. How then could I accept Mayavada or persuade myself to pit against the Truth imposed on me from above the logic of Shankara?

But I do not insist on everybody passing through my experience or following the Truth that is its consequence. I have no objection to anybody accepting Mayavada as his soul's truth or his mind's truth or their way out of the cosmic difficulty. I object to it only if somebody tries to push it down my throat or the world's throat as the sole possible,

satisfying and all-comprehensive explanation of things. For it is not that at all. There are many other possible explanations; it is not at all satisfactory, for in the end it explains nothing; and it is—and must be unless it departs from its own logic—all-exclusive, not in the least all-comprehensive. But that does not matter. A theory may be wrong or at least one-sided and imperfect and yet extremely practical and useful. This has been amply shown by the history of Science. In fact, a theory whether philosophical or scientific, is nothing else than a support for the mind, a practical device to help it to deal with its object, a staff to uphold it and make it walk more confidently and get along on its difficult journey. The very exclusiveness and one-sidedness of the Mayavada make it a strong staff or a forceful stimulus for a spiritual endeavour which means to be one-sided, radical and exclusive. It supports the effort of the Mind to get away from itself and from Life by a short cut into superconscience. Or rather it is the Purusha in Mind that wants to get away from the limitations of Mind and Life into the superconscient Infinite. Theoretically, the way for that is for the mind to deny all its perceptions and all the preoccupations of the vital and see and treat them as illusions. Practically, when the mind draws back from itself, it enters easily

into a relationless peace in which nothing matters—for in its absoluteness there are no mental or vital values—and from which the mind can rapidly move towards that great short cut to the superconscient, mindless trance, *susupti*. In proportion to the thoroughness of that movement all the perceptions it had once accepted become unreal to it—illusion, Maya. It is on its road towards immergence.

Mayavada therefore with its sole stress on Nirvana, quite apart from its defects as a mental theory of things, serves a great spiritual end and, as a path, can lead very high and far. Even, if the Mind were the last word and there were nothing beyond it except the pure Spirit, I would not be averse to accepting it as the only way out. For what the mind with its perceptions and the vital with its desires have made of life in this world, is a very bad mess, and if there were nothing better to be hoped for, the shortest cut to an exit would be the best. But my experience is that there is something beyond mind; Mind is not the last word here of the Spirit. Mind is an ignorance-consciousness and its perceptions cannot be anything else than either false, mixed or imperfect—even when true, a partial reflection of the Truth and not the very body of Truth herself. But there is a Truth-Consciousness, not static only and self-introspective, but also dynamic and creative,

and I prefer to get at that and see what it says about things and can do rather than take the short cut away from things offered as its own end by the Ignorance.

Shankara's Mayavada and Integral Yoga

I do not base my Yoga on the insufficient ground that the Self (not soul) is eternally free. That affirmation leads to nothing beyond itself, or, if used as a starting-point, it could equally well lead to the conclusion that action and creation have no significance or value. The question is not that but of the meaning of creation, whether there is a Supreme who is not merely a pure undifferentiated Consciousness and Being, but the source and support also of the dynamic energy of creation and whether the cosmic existence has for It a significance and a value. That is a question which cannot be settled by metaphysical logic which deals in words and ideas, but by a spiritual experience which goes beyond Mind and enters into spiritual realities. Each mind is satisfied with its own reasoning, but for spiritual purposes that satisfaction has no validity, except as an indication of how far and on what line each one is prepared to go in the field of spiritual experience.

If your reasoning leads you towards the Shankara idea of the Supreme, that might be an indication that the Vedanta Adwaita (Mayavada) is your way of advance.

This Yoga accepts the value of cosmic existence and holds it to be a reality; its object is to enter into a higher Truth-Consciousness or Divine Supramental Consciousness in which action and creation are the expression not of ignorance and imperfection, but of the Truth, the Light, the Divine Ananda. But for that, surrender of the mortal mind, life and body to that Higher Consciousness is indispensable, since it is too difficult for the mortal human being to pass by its own effort beyond mind to a Supramental Consciousness in which the dynamism is no longer mental but of quite another power. Only those who can accept the call to such a change should enter into this Yoga.

2-10-1938

The Realistic and the Illusionist Adwaita

There is possible a realistic as well as an illusionist Adwaita. The philosophy of *The Life Divine* is such a realistic Adwaita. The world is a manifestation

of the Real and therefore is itself real. The reality is the infinite and eternal Divine, infinite and eternal Being, Consciousness-Force and Bliss. This Divine by his power has created the world or rather manifested it in his own infinite Being. But here in the material world or at its basis he has hidden himself in what seem to be his opposites, Non-Being, Inconscience and Insentience. This is what we nowadays call the Inconscient which seems to have created the material universe by its inconscient Energy, but this is only an appearance, for we find in the end that all the dispositions of the world can only have been arranged by the working of a supreme secret Intelligence. The Being which is hidden in what seems to be an inconscient void emerges in the world first in Matter, then in Life, then in Mind and finally as the Spirit. The apparently inconscient Energy which creates is in fact the Consciousness-Force of the Divine and its aspect of consciousness, secret in Matter, begins to emerge in Life, finds something more of itself in Mind and finds its true self in a spiritual consciousness and finally a Supramental Consciousness through which we become aware of the Reality, enter into it and unite ourselves with it. This is what we call evolution which is an evolution of Consciousness and an evolution of the Spirit in things and only

outwardly an evolution of species. Thus also, the delight of existence emerges from the original insentience, first in the contrary forms of pleasure and pain, and then has to find itself in the bliss of the Spirit or, as it is called in the Upanishads, the bliss of the Brahman. That is the central idea in the explanation of the universe put forward in *The Life Divine*.

Shankara and Illusionism

Q: A writer in "Prabuddha Bharata" states that your understanding of Shankara's philosophy is not right. Perhaps he bases his statement on the ground that you have missed the indications of Brahmavada or Bhaktivada that Shankara brings in at places. I doubt if Vivekananda or Ramakrishna accepted Shankara's philosophy in toto.

A: They want to show that Shankara was not so savagely illusionist as he is represented—that he gave a certain temporary reality to the world, admitted Shakti, etc. But these (supposing he made them) are concessions inconsistent with the logic of his own philosophy which is that only the Brahman exists and the rest is ignorance and illusion. The

rest has only a temporary and therefore an illusory reality in Maya. He further maintained that Brahman could not be reached by works. If that was not his philosophy, I should like to know what was his philosophy. At any rate that was how his philosophy has been understood by people. Now that the general turn is away from the rigorous Illusionism, many of the Adwaitists seem to want to hedge and make Shankara hedge with them.

Vivekananda accepted Shankara's philosophy with modifications, the chief of them being Daridra-Narayan-Seva which is a mixture of Buddhist compass on and modern philanthropy.

8-2-1935

New Elements in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga

By transformation I do not mean some change of the nature—I do not mean, for instance, sainthood or ethical perfection or Yogic siddhis (like the Tantrik's) or a transcendental (*chinmaya*) body. I use transformation in a special sense, a change of consciousness radical and complete and of a certain specific kind which is so conceived as to bring about a strong and assured step forward in

the spiritual evolution of the being of a greater and higher kind and of a larger sweep and completeness than what took place when a mentalised being first appeared in a vital and material animal world. If anything short of that takes place or at least if a real beginning is not made on that basis, a fundamental progress towards this fulfilment, then my object is not accomplished. A partial realisation, something mixed and inconclusive, does not meet the demand I make on life and Yoga.

Light of realisation is not the same thing as Descent. Realisation by itself does not necessarily transform the being as a whole; it may bring only an opening or heightening or widening of the consciousness at the top so as to realise something in the Purusha part without any radical change in the parts of Prakriti. One may have some light of realisation at the spiritual summit of the consciousness but the parts below remain what they were. I have seen any number of instances of that. There must be a descent of the light not merely into the mind or part of it but into all the being down to the physical and below before a real transformation can take place. A light in the mind may spiritualise or otherwise change the mind or part of it in one way or another, but it need not change the vital nature; a light in the vital may purify and enlarge the vital

movements or else silence and immobilise the vital being, but leave the body and the physical consciousness as it was, or even leave it inert or shake its balance. And the descent of Light is not enough, it must be the descent of the whole higher consciousness, its Peace, Power, Knowledge, Love, Ananda. Moreover the descent may be enough to liberate, but not to perfect, or it may be enough to make a great change in the inner being, while the outer remains an imperfect instrument, clumsy, sick or unexpressive. Finally, transformation effected by the sadhana cannot be complete unless it is a supramentalisation of the being. Psychicisation is not enough, it is only a beginning; spiritualisation and the descent of the higher consciousness is not enough, it is only a middle term; the ultimate achievement needs the action of the Supramental Consciousness and Force. Something less than that may very well be considered enough by the individual, but it is not enough for the earth-consciousness to take the definitive stride forward it must take at one time or another.

I have never said that my Yoga was something brand new in all its elements. I have called it the integral Yoga and that means that it takes up the essence and many processes of the old Yogas—its newness is in its aim, standpoint and the totality

of its method. In the earlier stages which is all I deal with in books like the "Riddle" or the "Lights" or in the new book to be published¹ there is nothing in it that distinguishes it from the old Yogas except the aim underlying its comprehensiveness, the spirit in its movements and the ultimate significance it keeps before it—also the scheme of its psychology and its working: but as that was not and could not be developed systematically or schematically in these letters, it has not been grasped by those who are not already acquainted with it by mental familiarity or some amount of practice. The detail or method of the later stages of the Yoga which go into little known or untrodden regions, I have not made public and I do not at present intend to do so.

I know very well also that there have been seemingly allied ideals and anticipations—the perfectibility of the race, certain Tantric sadhanas, the effort after a complete physical siddhi by certain schools of Yoga, etc., etc. I have alluded to these things myself and have put forth the view that the spiritual past of the race has been a preparation of Nature not merely for attaining the Divine beyond the world, but also for the very step forward which the evolution of the earth-consciousness has still

¹ *The Bases of Yoga*

to make. I do not therefore care in the least,—even though these ideals were, up to some extent parallel, yet not identical with mine,—whether this Yoga and its aim and method are accepted as new or not; that is in itself a trifling matter. That it should be recognised as true in itself by those who can accept or practise it and should make itself true by achievement is the one thing important; it does not matter if it is called new or a repetition or revival of the old which was forgotten. I laid emphasis on it as new in a letter to certain sadhaks so as to explain to them that a repetition of the aim and idea of the old Yogas was not enough in my eyes, that I was putting forward a thing to be achieved that has not yet been achieved, not yet clearly visualised, even though it is one natural but still secret outcome of all the past spiritual endeavour.

It is new as compared with the old Yogas:

(1) Because it aims not at a departure out of world and life into Heaven or Nirvana, but at a change of life and existence, not as something subordinate or incidental, but as a distinct and central object. If there is a descent in other Yogas, yet it is only an incident on the way or resulting from the ascent—the ascent is the real thing. Here the ascent is the first step, but it is a means for the descent. It is the descent of the

new consciousness attained by the ascent that is the stamp and seal of the sadhana. Even the Tantra and Vaishnavism end in the release from life; here the object is the divine fulfilment of life.

(2) Because the object sought after is not an individual achievement of divine realisation for the sake of the individual, but something to be gained for the earth-consciousness here, a cosmic, not solely a supra-cosmic achievement. The thing to be gained also is the bringing in of a Power of Consciousness (the Supramental) not yet organised or active directly in earth-nature, even in the spiritual life, but yet to be organised and made directly active.

(3) Because a method has been preconized for achieving this purpose which is as total and integral as the aim set before it, viz., the total and integral change of the consciousness and nature, taking up old methods but only as a part action and present aid to others that are distinctive. I have not found this method (as a whole) or anything like it professed or realised in the old Yogas. If I had, I should not have wasted my time in hewing out paths and in thirty years of search and inner creation when I could have hastened home safely to my goal in an easy canter

over paths already blazed out, laid down, perfectly mapped, macadamised, made secure and public. Our Yoga is not a retreading of old walks, but a spiritual adventure.

5-10-1935

Transformation and Purification

(I)

"Transformation" is a word that I have brought in myself (like "Supermind") to express certain spiritual concepts and spiritual facts of the integral Yoga. People are now taking them up and using them in senses which have nothing to do with the significance which I put into them. Purification of the nature by the "influence" of the Spirit is not what I mean by transformation; purification is only part of a psychic change or a psycho-spiritual change—the word besides has many senses and is very often given a moral or ethical meaning which is foreign to my purpose. What I mean by the spiritual transformation is something dynamic (not merely liberation of the Self or realisation of the One which can very well be attained without any

descent). It is a putting on of the spiritual consciousness dynamic as well as static in every part of the being down to the subconscious. That cannot be done by the influence of the Self leaving the consciousness fundamentally as it is with only purification, enlightenment of the mind and heart and quiescence of the vital. It means a bringing down of the divine Consciousness static and dynamic into all these parts and the entire replacement of the present consciousness by that. This we find unveiled and unmixed above mind, life and body. It is a matter of the undeniable experience of many that this can descend and it is my experience that nothing short of its *full* descent can thoroughly remove the veil and mixture and effect the full spiritual transformation. No metaphysical or logical reasoning in the voids as to what the Atman "must" do or can do or needs or needs not to do is relevant here or of any value. I may add that transformation is not the central object of other paths as it is of this Yoga—only so much purification and change is demanded by them as will lead to liberation and the beyond-life. The influence of the Atman can no doubt do that—a full descent of a new consciousness into the whole nature from top to bottom to transform life here is not needed at all for the spiritual escape from life.

(2)

The words Supermind and Supramental were first used by me, but since then people have taken up and are using the word supramental for anything above mind. Psychic is ordinarily used in the sense of anything relating to the inner movements of the consciousness or anything phenomenal in the psychology; in this case I have made a special use of it, relating it to the Greek word *psyche* meaning soul; but ordinarily people make no distinction between the soul and the mental-vital consciousness; for them it is all the same. The ascent of the Kundalini—not its descent, so far as I know—is a recognised phenomenon, there is one that corresponds in our Yoga, the feeling of the consciousness ascending from the vital or physical to meet the higher consciousness. This is not necessarily through the *chakras* but is often felt in the whole body. Similarly the descent of the higher consciousness is not felt necessarily or usually through the *chakras* but as occupying the whole head, neck, chest, abdomen, body.

18-6-1937

Spiritual Change and Supramental Transformation

If spiritual and Supramental were the same thing, as you say my readers imagine, then all the sages and devotees and Yogis and sadhaks throughout the ages would have been Supramental beings and all I have written about the Supermind would be so much superfluous stuff, useless and otiose. Anybody who had spiritual experiences would then be a Supramental being; the Ashram would be chock-full of Supramental beings and every other Ashram in India also. Spiritual experiences can fix themselves in the inner consciousness and alter it, transform it, if you like; one can realise the Divine everywhere, the Self in all and all in the Self, the universal Shakti doing all things; one can feel merged in the Cosmic Self or full of ecstatic bhakti or Ananda. But one may and usually does still go on in the outer parts of Nature thinking with the intellect or at best the intuitive mind, willing with a mental will, feeling joy and sorrow on the vital surface, undergoing physical afflictions and suffering from the struggle of life in the body with death and disease. The change then only will be that the inner self will watch all that without getting disturbed or bewildered, with a perfect equality, taking it as an inevitable part of Nature, inevitable

at least so long as one does not withdraw to the Self out of Nature. That is not the transformation I envisage. It is quite another power of knowledge, another kind of will, another luminous nature of emotion and aesthesis, another constitution of the physical consciousness that must come in by the Supramental change.

Physical Transformation and Siddhis

The physical Nature does not mean the body alone but the phrase includes the transformation of the whole physical mind, vital, material nature—not by imposing Siddhis on them, but by creating a new physical nature which is to be the habitation of the Supramental being in a new evolution. I am not aware that this has been done by any Hathayogic or other process. Mental or vital occult power can only bring Siddhis of the higher plane into the individual life—like the Sannyasi who could take any poison without harm, but he died of a poison after all when he forgot to observe the conditions of the Siddhi. The working of the Supramental power envisaged is not an influence on the physical giving it abnormal faculties, but an

entrance and penetration changing it wholly into a Supramentalised physical. I did not learn the idea from Veda or Upanishad and I do not know if there is anything of the kind there. What I received about the Supermind was a direct, not a derived knowledge given to me; it was only afterwards that I found certain confirmatory revelations in the Upanishad and Veda.

11-9-1936

Absence of Descent in Old Yogas

(1)

I never heard of silence descending in other Yogas—the mind goes into silence. Since, however, I have been writing of ascent and descent, I have been told from several quarters that there is nothing new in this Yoga—so I am wondering whether people were not getting ascents and descents without knowing it! Or, at least, without noticing the process. It is like the rising above the head and taking the station there—which I and others have experienced in this Yoga. When I

spoke of it first, people stared and thought I was talking nonsense. Wideness must have been felt in the old Yogas because otherwise one could not feel the universe in oneself or be free from the body consciousness or unite with the Anantam Brahma. But generally as in Tantric Yoga one speaks of the consciousness rising to the *brahma-randhra*, top of the head, as the summit. Rajayoga of course lays stress on Samadhi as means of the highest experience. But obviously if one had not the Brahmi Sthiti in the waking state, there is no completeness in the realisation. The Gita distinctly speaks of being Samahita (which is equivalent to being in Samadhi) and the Brahmi Sthiti as a waking state in which one lives and does all action.

June, 1936

(2)

So I have always thought. I explain this absence of the descent experiences myself by the old Yogas having been mainly confined to the psycho-spiritual-occult range of experience—in which the higher experiences come into the still mind or the concen-

trated heart by a sort of filtration or reflection—the field of this experience being from the Brahma-randhra downward. People went above this only in Samadhi or in a condition of static mukti without any dynamic descent. All that was dynamic took place in the region of the spiritualised mental and vital-physical consciousness. In this Yoga the consciousness (after the lower field has been prepared by a certain amount of psycho-spiritual-occult experience) is drawn upward above the Brahma-randhra to ranges above belonging to the spiritual consciousness proper and instead of merely receiving from there has to live there and from there change the lower consciousness altogether. For there is a dynamism proper to the spiritual consciousness whose nature is Light, Power, Ananda, Peace, Knowledge, infinite Wideness, and that must be possessed and descend into the whole being. Otherwise one can get mukti but not perfection or transformation (except a relative psycho-spiritual change). But if I say that, there will be a general howl against the unpardonable presumption of claiming to have a knowledge not possessed by the ancient saints and sages and pretending to transcend them. In that connection I may say that in the Upanishad (usually the Taittiriya) there are some indications of these higher planes and their nature and the

possibility of gathering up the whole consciousness and rising into them. But this was forgotten afterwards and people spoke only of the buddhi as the highest thing with the Purusha or Self just above, but there was no clear idea of these higher planes. Ergo, ascent possibly to unknown and ineffable heavenly regions in Samadhi, but no descent possible—therefore no reason, no possibility, of transformation here, only escape from life and mukti in Goloka, Brahmaloaka, Shivaloka or the Absolute.

II-6-1936

(3)

Q: Was there not anything like descent in Ramakrishna or Chaitanya or in old Yogins? They seem to have intense visions, experiences and realisations and high states of Samadhi but we do not read of their having descents.

A: It happens that people may get the descent without noticing that it is a descent because they feel the result only. The ordinary Yoga does not go beyond the spiritual mind—people feel at the top of the head the joining with the Brahman, but

they are not aware of a consciousness above the head. In the same way, in the ordinary Yoga one feels the ascent of the awakened lower consciousness (Kundalini) to the *brahma-randhra* where the Prakriti joins the Brahman-consciousness, but they do not feel the descent. Some may have had these things, but I don't know that they understood their nature, principle or place in a complete sadhana. At least I never heard of these things from others before I found them out in my own experience. The reason is that the old Yogins when they went above the spiritual mind passed into Samadhi, which means that they did not attempt to be conscious in these higher planes—their aim being to pass away into the Superconscious and not to bring the Superconscious into the waking consciousness which is that of my Yoga.

26-7-1935

Overhead Ascension in Integral Yoga

One may ask, first, why not then say that the Jivatman which can be realised in this way is the pure "I" of which the lower self has the experience

and through which it gets its salvation; and, secondly, what need is there of going into the overhead planes at all? Well, in the first place, this pure "I" does not seem to be absolutely necessary as an intermediary of the liberation whether into the impersonal Self or Brahman or into whatever is eternal. The Buddhists do not admit any soul or self or any experience of the pure "I"; they proceed by dissolving the consciousness into a bundle of samskaras, get rid of the samskaras and so are liberated into some Permanent which they refuse to describe, or some Shunya. So the experience of a pure "I" or Jivatman is not binding on everyone who wants liberation into the Eternal but is content to get it without rising beyond the spiritualised mind into a higher Light above. I myself had my experience of Nirvana and silence in the Brahman, etc. long before there was any knowledge of the overhead spiritual planes; it came first simply by an absolute stillness and blotting out as it were of all mental, emotional and other inner activities—the body continued indeed to see, walk, speak and do its other business, but as an empty automatic machine and nothing more. I did not become aware of any pure "I" nor even of any self, impersonal or other,—there was only an awareness of That as the sole Reality, all else being quite unsubstantial, void, non-real.

As to what realised that Reality, it was a nameless consciousness which was not other than That¹; one could perhaps say this, though hardly even so much as this, since there was no mental concept of it, but not more. Neither was I aware of any lower soul or outer self called by such and such a personal name that was performing this feat of arriving at the consciousness of Nirvana. Well, then what becomes of your pure "I" and lower "I" in all that? Consciousness (not this or that part of consciousness or an "I" of any kind) suddenly emptied itself of all inner contents and remained aware only of unreal surroundings and of Something real but ineffable. You may say that there must have been a consciousness aware of a some perceiving existence, if not of a pure "I", but, if so, it was something for which these names seem inadequate.

I have said the overhead ascension is not indispensable for the usual spiritual purposes,—but it is indispensable for the purposes of this Yoga. For its aim is to become aware of and liberate and transform and unite all the being in the light of a Truth-consciousness which is above and cannot be reached if there is no entirely inward-going and no tran-

¹ Mark that I did not think these things, there were no thoughts or concepts nor did they present themselves like that to any Me; it simply just was so or was self-apparently so.

scending and upward-going movement. Hence all the complexity of my psychological statements as a whole, not new in essence—for much of it occurs in the Upanishads and elsewhere, but new in its fullness of collective statement and its developments directed towards an integral Yoga. It is not necessary for anyone to accept it unless he concurs in the aim; for other aims it is unnecessary and may very well be excessive.

22-7-1937

Interpenetration of the Planes

The interpenetration of the planes is indeed for me a capital and fundamental part of spiritual experience without which Yoga as I practise it and its aim could not exist. For that aim is to manifest, reach or embody a higher consciousness upon earth and not to get away from earth into a higher world or some supreme Absolute. The old Yogas (not quite all of them) tended the other way—but that was, I think, because they found the earth as it is a rather impossible place for any spiritual being and the resistance to change too obstinate to be borne;

earth-nature looked to them in Vivekananda's simile like the dog's tail which, every time you straighten it, goes back to its original curl. But the fundamental proposition in this matter was proclaimed very definitely in the Upanishads which went so far as to say that Earth is the foundation and all the worlds are on the earth and to imagine a clean-cut or irreconcilable difference between them is ignorance: here and not elsewhere, not by going to some other world, the divine realisation must come. This statement was used to justify a purely individual realisation, but it can equally be the basis of a wider endeavour.

14-1-1934

Different Statures of Transformation

(1)

There are different statuses of the divine consciousness. There are also different statuses of transformation. First is the psychic transformation, in which all is in contact with the Divine through the individual psychic consciousness. Next is the spiritual transformation in which all is merged in the Divine in the cosmic consciousness. Third is

the supramental transformation in which all becomes supramentalised in the divine gnostic consciousness. It is only with the latter that there can begin the *complete* transformation of mind, life and body—in my sense of completeness.

You are mistaken in two respects. First, the endeavour towards this achievement is not new and some Yogis have achieved it, I believe—but not in the way I want it. They achieved it as a personal siddhi maintained by Yoga-siddhi—not a dharma of the nature (physical transformation). Secondly, the supramental transformation is not the same as the spiritual-mental. It is a change of mind, life and body which the mental or overmental-spiritual cannot achieve. All whom you mention were spirituals, but in different ways. Krishna's mind, for instance, was overmentalised, Ramakrishna's intuitive, Chaitanya's spiritual-psychic, Buddha's illumined higher mental. I don't know about Bejoy Goswami—he seems to have been brilliant but rather chaotic. All that is different from the supramental. Then about the vital of the Paramhansas. It is said that their vital behaves either like a child (Ramakrishna) or like a madman or like a demon or like something inert (cf. Jada-bharata). Well, there is nothing supramental in all that. So?.....

One can be an instrument of the Divine in any of the transformations. The question is, an instrument for what?

April, 1935

(2)

The Paramhansa is a particular grade of realisation, there are others supposed to be lower or higher. I have no objection to them in their own place. But I must remind you that in my Yoga all vital movements must come under the influence of the psychic and of the spiritual calm, knowledge, peace. If they conflict with the psychic or spiritual control, they upset the balance and prevent the forming of the base of transformation. If unbalance is good for other paths, that is the business of those who follow them. It does not suit mine.

May, 1935

Traditional Paths and Supramental Transformation

You appeal to the Vaishnava-Tantric traditions;

to Chaitanya, Ramprasad, Ramakrishna. I know something about them and, if I did not try to repeat them, it is because I do not find in them the solution, the reconciliation I am seeking. Your quotation from Ramprasad does not assist me in the least—and it does not support your thesis either. Ramprasad is not speaking of an embodied, but of a bodiless and invisible Divine—or visible only in a subtle form to the inner experience. When he speaks of maintaining his claim or case against the Mother until she lifts him into her lap, he is not speaking of any outer vital or physical contact, but of an inner psychic experience; precisely, he is protesting against her keeping him in the external vital and physical nature and insists on her taking him on the psycho-spiritual plane into spiritual union with her.

All that is very good and very beautiful, but it is not enough: the union has indeed to be realised in the inner psycho-spiritual experience first, because without that nothing sound or lasting can be done; but also there must be a realisation of the Divine in the outer consciousness and life, in the vital and physical planes on their own essential lines. It is that which, without your mind understanding it or how it is to be done, you are asking for, and I too; only I see the necessity of a vital transformation,

while you seem to think and to demand that it should be done without any radical transformation, leaving the vital as it is. In the beginning, before I discovered the secret of the Supermind, I myself tried to seek the reconciliation through an association of the spiritual consciousness with the vital, but my experience and all experience show that this leads to nothing definite and final,—it ends where it began, midway between the two poles of human nature. An association is not enough, a transformation is indispensable.

The tradition of later Vaishnava Bhakti is an attempt to sublimate the vital impulses through love by turning human love towards the Divine. It made a strong and intense effort and had many rich and beautiful experiences; but its weakness was just there, that it remained valid only as an inner experience turned towards the Inner Divine, but it stopped at that point. Chaitanya's *prema* was nothing but a psychic divine love with a strong sublimated vital manifestation. But the moment Vaishnavism before or after him made an attempt at greater externalisation, we know what happened—a vitalistic deterioration, much corruption and decline. You cannot appeal to Chaitanya's example as against psychic or divine love; his was not something merely vital-human; in its essence, though not

in its form, it was very much the first step in the transformation, which we ask of the sadhaks, to make their love psychic and use the vital not for its own sake, but as an expression of the soul's realisation. It is the first step and perhaps for some it may be sufficient, for we are not asking everybody to become supramental; but for any full manifestation on the physical plane the supramental is indispensable.

In the later Vaishnava tradition the sadhana takes the form of an application of human vital love in all its principal turns to the Divine; *viraha*, *abhimān*, even complete separation (like the departure of Krishna to Mathura) are made prominent elements of this Yoga. But all that was only meant—in the sadhana itself, not in the Vaishnava poems—as a passage of which the end is *milan* or complete union; but the stress laid on the untoward elements by some would almost seem to make strife, separation, *abhimān*, the whole means, if not the very object of this kind of *prema-yoga*. Again, this method was only applied to the inner, not to a physically embodied Divine and had a reference to certain states and reactions of the inner consciousness in its seeking after the Divine. In the relations with the embodied Divine Manifestation, or, I may add, of the disciple with the Guru, such things might

rise as a result of human imperfection, but they were not made part of the theory of the relations. I do not think they formed a regular and authorised part of the relations of the bhaktas to the Guru. On the contrary, the relation of the disciple to the Guru in the Guruvada is supposed always to be that of worship, respect, a complete happy confidence, an unquestioning acceptance of the guidance. The application of the unchanged vital relations to the embodied Divine may lead and has led to movements which are not conducive to the progress of the Yoga.

Ramakrishna's Yoga was also turned only to an inner realisation of the inner Divine,—nothing less, but also nothing more. I believe Ramakrishna's sentence about the claim of the sadhak on the Divine for whom he has sacrificed everything was the assertion of an inner and not an outer claim, on the inner rather than on any physically embodied Divine: it was a claim for the full spiritual union, the God-lover seeking the Divine, but the Divine also giving himself and meeting the God-lover. There can be no objection to that; such a claim all seekers of the Divine have; but as to the modalities of this divine meeting, it does not carry us much farther. In any case, my object is a realisation on the physical plane and I cannot consent merely to repeat Rama-

krishna. I seem to remember too that for a long time he was withdrawn into himself, all his life was not spent with his disciples. He got his siddhi first in retirement and when he came out and received everyone, well, a few years of it wore out his body. To that, I suppose, he had no objection; for he even pronounced a theory, when Keshav Chandra was dying, that spiritual experience ought to wear out the body. But at the same time, when asked why he got illness in the throat, he answered that it was the sins of his disciples which they threw upon him and he had to swallow. Not being satisfied, as he was, with an inner liberation alone, I cannot accept these ideas or these results, for that does not sound to me like a successful meeting of the Divine and the sadhak on the physical plane, however successful it might have been for the inner life. Krishna did great things and was very clearly a manifestation of the Divine. But I remember a passage of the Mahabharat in which he complains of the unquiet life his followers and adorers gave him, their constant demands, reproaches, their throwing of their unregenerate vital nature upon him. And in the Gita he speaks of this human world as a transient and sorrowful affair and, in spite of his gospel of divine action, seems almost to admit that to leave it is after all the best solution. The traditions of the past

are very great in their own place, in the past, but I do not see why we should merely repeat them and not go farther. In the spiritual development of the consciousness upon earth the great past ought to be followed by a greater future.

There is the rule that you seem all to ignore entirely—the difficulties of the physical embodiment and the divine realisation on the physical plane. For most it seems to be a simple alternative, either the Divine comes down in full power and the thing is done, no difficulty, no necessary conditions, no law or process, only miracle and magic, or else, well, this cannot be the Divine. Again you all (or almost all) insist on the Divine becoming human, remaining in the human consciousness and you protest against any attempt to make the human Divine. On the other hand, there is an outcry of disappointment, bewilderment, distrust, perhaps indignation if there are human difficulties, if there is strain in the body, a swaying struggle with adverse forces, obstacles, checks, illness and some begin to say, "Oh, there is nothing Divine here!"—as if one could remain vitally and physically in the untransformed individual human consciousness, in unchanged contact with it, satisfy its demands, and yet be immune under all circumstances and in all conditions against strain and struggle and

illness. If I want to divinise the human consciousness, to bring down the Supramental, the Truth-Consciousness, the Light, the Force into the physical to transform it, to create there a great fullness of Truth and Light and Power and Bliss and Love, the response is repulsion or fear or unwillingness—or a doubt whether it is possible. On one side there is the claim that illness and the rest should be impossible, on the other a violent rejection of the only condition under which these things can become impossible. I know that this is the natural inconsistency of the human vital mind wanting two inconsistent and incompatible things together; but that is one reason why it is necessary to transform the human and put something a little more luminous in its place.

But is the Divine then something so terrible, horrible or repellent that the idea of its entry into the physical, its divinising of the human should create this shrinking, refusal, revolt or fear? I can understand that the unregenerate vital attached to its own petty sufferings and pleasures, to the brief ignorant drama of life, should shrink from what will change it. But why should a God-lover, a God-seeker, a sadhak fear the divinisation of the consciousness? Why should he object to become one in nature with what he seeks, why should he

recoil from *sādrśya-mukti*? Behind this fear there are usually two causes: first, there is the feeling of the vital that it will have to cease to be obscure, crude, muddy, egoistic, unrefined (spiritually), full of stimulating desires and small pleasures and interesting sufferings (for it shrinks even from the Ananda which will replace this); next there is some vague ignorant idea of the mind, due, I suppose, to the ascetic tradition, that the divine nature is something cold, bare, empty, austere, aloof, without the glorious riches of the egoistic human vital life. As if there were not a divine vital and as if that divine vital is not itself and, when it gets the means to manifest, will not make the life on earth also infinitely more full of beauty, love, radiance, warmth, fire, intensity and divine passion and capacity for bliss than the present impotent, suffering, pettily and transiently excited and soon tired vitality of the still so imperfect human creation.

But you will say that it is not the Divine from which you recoil, rather you accept and ask for it (provided that it is not too divine), but what you object to is the Supramental—grand, aloof, incomprehensible, unapproachable, a sort of austere Nirakar Brahman. The Supramental so described is a bogey created by this part of your vital mind in order to frighten itself and justify its attitude.

Behind this strange description there seems to be an idea that the Supramental is a new version of the Vedantic featureless and incommunicable Para-brahman, vast, grand, cold, empty, remote, devastating, overwhelming; it is not quite that, of course, since it can come down, but for all practical purposes it is just as bad! It is curious that you admit your ignorance of what the Supramental can be, and yet you in these moods not only pronounce categorically what it is like, but reject emphatically my experience about it as of no practical validity or not valid for anybody but myself! I have not insisted, I have answered only casually because I am not asking you now to be non-human and divine, much less to be supramental; but as you are always returning to this point when you have these attacks and making it the pivot—or at least a main support—of your depression, I am obliged to answer. The Supramental is *not* grand, aloof, cold and austere; it is not something opposed to or inconsistent with a full vital and physical manifestation; on the contrary, it carries in it the only possibility of the full fullness of the vital force and the physical life on earth. It is because it is so, because it was so revealed to me and for no other reason that I have followed after it and persevered till I came into contact with it and was able to draw down some power of it and its

influence. I am concerned with the earth, not with worlds beyond for their own sake; it is a terrestrial realisation that I seek and not a flight to distant summits. All other Yogas regard this life as an illusion or a passing phase; the supramental Yoga alone regards it as a thing created by the Divine for a progressive manifestation and takes the fulfilment of the life and the body for its object. The Supramental is simply the Truth-Consciousness and what it brings in its descent is the full truth of life, the full truth of consciousness in Matter. One has indeed to rise to high summits to reach it, but the more one rises, the more one can bring down below. No doubt, life and body have not to remain the ignorant, imperfect, impotent things they are now; but why should a change to fuller life-power, fuller body-power be considered something aloof, cold and undesirable? The utmost Ananda the body and life are now capable of is a brief excitement of the vital mind or the nerves or the cells which is limited, imperfect and soon passes: with the supramental change all the cells, nerves, vital forces, embodied mental forces can become filled with a thousandfold Ananda, capable of an intensity of bliss which passes description and which need not fade away. How aloof, repellent and undesirable! The supramental love means an intense unity of

soul with soul, mind with mind, life with life, and an entire flooding of the body consciousness with the physical experience of oneness, the presence of the Beloved in every part, in every cell of the body. Is that too something aloof and grand but undesirable? With the supramental change, the very thing on which you insist, the possibility of the free physical meeting of the embodied Divine with the sadhak without conflict of forces and without undesirable reactions becomes possible, assured and free. That too is, I suppose, something aloof and undesirable? I could go on—for pages, but this is enough for the moment.

14-1-1932

The Past and the Future Spiritual Development

I have no time to read books usually. I seldom had and none at all now. I have had no inspirations from the sadhana of Bejoy Goswami, though a good deal at one time from Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. My remarks simply meant that I regard the spiritual history of mankind and specially of India as a constant development of a divine

purpose, not a book that is closed, the lines of which have to be constantly repeated. Even the Upanishads and the Gita were not final though everything may be there in seed. In this development the recent spiritual history of India is a very important stage and the names I mentioned had a special prominence in my thought at the time—they seemed to me to indicate the lines from which the future spiritual development had most directly to proceed, not staying but passing on. I do not know that I would put my meaning exactly in the language you suggest. I may say that it is far from my purpose to propagate any religion new or old for humanity in the future. A way to be opened that is still blocked, not a religion to be founded is my conception of the matter.

18-8-1935

Yoga of The Gita and Integral Yoga

Our Yoga is not identical with the Yoga of the Gita although it contains all that is essential in the Gita's Yoga. In our Yoga we begin with the idea, the will, the aspiration of the complete surrender;

but at the same time we have to reject the lower nature, deliver our consciousness from it, deliver the self involved in the lower nature by the self rising to freedom in the higher nature. If we do not do this double movement, we are in danger of making a tamasic and therefore unreal surrender, making no effort, no tapas and therefore no progress; or else, we may make a rajasic surrender not to the Divine but to some self-made false idea or image of the Divine which masks our rajasic ego or something still worse.

Gita's Reconciliation and The Full Supramental Truth

The language of the Gita in many matters seems sometimes contradictory because it admits two apparently opposite truths and tries to reconcile them. It admits the ideal of departure from Sam-sara into the Brahman as one possibility; also it affirms the possibility of living free in the Divine (in Me, it says) and acting in the world as the Jivanmukta. It is this latter kind of solution on which it lays the greatest emphasis. So Ramakrishna put the "divine souls" (Ishwarakoti) who can

descend the ladder as well as ascend it higher than the Jivas (Jivakoti) who, once having ascended, have not the strength to descend again for divine work. The full truth is in the supramental consciousness and the power to work from there on life and Matter.

Karma and Integral Yoga

I have never disputed the truth of the old Yogas—I have myself had the experience of Vaishnava Bhakti and of Nirvana in the Brahman; I recognise their truth in their own field and for their own purpose—the truth of their experience so far as it goes—though I am in no way bound to accept the truth of the mental philosophies founded on the experience. I similarly find that my Yoga is true in its own field—a larger field, as I think—and for its own purpose. The purpose of the old is to get away from life to the Divine—so obviously, let us drop Karma. The purpose of the new is to reach the Divine and bring the fullness of what is gained into life—for that, Yoga by works is indispensable. It seems to me that there is no mystery about that or anything to perplex anybody—it is rational and

inevitable. Only you say that the thing is impossible; but that is what is said about everything before it is done.

I may point out that Karmayoga is not a new but a very old Yoga; the Gita was not written yesterday and Karmayoga existed before the Gita. Your idea that the only justification in the Gita for works is that it is all an unavoidable nuisance, so better make the best use of it, is rather summary and crude. If that were all, the Gita would be the production of an imbecile and I would hardly have been justified in writing two volumes on it or the world in reading it as one of the greatest scriptures, especially for its treatment of the place of works in spiritual endeavour. There is surely more in it than that. Anyhow, your doubts whether works can lead to realisation or rather your flat and sweeping denial of the possibility contradicts the experience of those who have achieved this supposed impossibility. You say that work lowers the consciousness, brings you out of the inner into the outer—yes, if you consent to externalise yourself in it instead of doing works from within; but that is what one has to learn not to do. Thought and feeling also can externalise one in the same way; but it is a question of linking thought, feeling and act firmly to the inner consciousness by living there

and making the rest an instrument. Difficult? Even bhakti is not easy and Nirvana for most men more difficult than that.

I do not know why you drag in humanitarianism, activism, philanthropical *seva*, etc. None of these are part of my Yoga or in harmony with my works, so they don't touch me. I never thought that politics or feeding the poor or writing beautiful poems would lead straight to Vaikuntha or the Absolute. If it were so, Romesh Dutt on one side and Baudelaire on the other would be the first to attain the Highest and welcome us there. It is not the form of the work itself or mere activity but the consciousness and Godward will behind it that are the essence of Karmayoga; the work is only the necessary instrumentation for the union with the Master of works, the transit to the pure will and power of Light from the will and power of the Ignorance.

Finally, why suppose that I am against meditation or bhakti? I have not the slightest objection to your taking either or both as the means of approach to the Divine. Only I saw no reason why anyone should fall foul of works and deny the truth of those who have reached, as the Gita says, through works perfect realisation and oneness of nature with the Divine, *samsiddhim sādharmanyam* (as did

Janaka and others)—simply because he himself cannot find or has not yet found their deeper secret—hence my defence of works.

23-12-1934

Karma and Meditation

Concentration and meditation are not the same thing. One can be concentrated in work or bhakti as well as in meditation.... If I devoted 9/10th of my time to concentration and none to work, the result would be equally unsatisfactory. My concentration is for a particular work—it is not for meditation divorced from life. When I concentrate, I work upon others, upon the world, upon the play of forces. What I say is that to spend all the time reading and writing letters is not sufficient for the purpose. I am not asking to become a meditative Sannyasi.

....It does not mean that I lose the higher consciousness while doing the work of correspondence. If I did that, I would not only not be Supramental, but would be very far even from the full Yogic consciousness....

If I have to help somebody to repel an attack, I can't do it by only writing a note, I have to send him some Force or else concentrate and do the work for him. Also I can't bring down the Supramental by merely writing neatly to people about it. I am not asking for leisure to meditate at ease in a blissful indolence. I said distinctly I wanted it for concentration in other more important work than correspondence.

The ignorance underlying this attitude is in the assumption that one must necessarily do only work or only meditation. Either work is the means or meditation is the means, but both cannot be! I have never said, so far as I know, that meditation should not be done. To set up an open competition or a closed one between work and meditation is a trick of the dividing mind and belongs to the old Yoga. Please remember that I have been declaring all along an integral Yoga in which Knowledge, Bhakti, Works—light of consciousness, Ananda and love, will and power in works—meditation, adoration, service of the Divine have all their place. Have I written seven volumes of the *Arya* all in vain? Meditation is not greater than Yoga of works nor works greater than Yoga by knowledge—both are equal.

Another thing—it is a mistake to argue from one's

own very limited experience, ignoring that of others and build on it large generalisations about Yoga. This is what many do, but the method has obvious demerits. You have no experience of major realisations and you conclude that such realisations are impossible. But what of the many who have had them—elsewhere and here too in the Ashram? That has no value? You hint to me that I have failed to get anything by works? How do you know? I have not written the history of my sadhana—if I had, you would have seen that if I had not made action and work one of my chief means of realisation—well, there would have been no sadhana and no realisation except that, perhaps, of Nirvana.

I shall perhaps add something hereafter as to what works can do, but no time to-night.

Don't conclude, however, that I am exalting works as the sole means of realisation. I am only giving it its due place.

You will excuse the vein of irony or satire in all this—but really when I am told that my own case disproves my whole spiritual philosophy and accumulated knowledge and experience, a little liveliness in answer is permissible.

19-12-1934

Insufficiency of Vedantic Pantheistic Experience

I have not read Ramadas's writings nor am I at all acquainted with his personality or what may be the level of his experience. The words you quote from him could be expressions either of a simple faith or of a pantheistic experience; evidently, if they are used or intended to establish the thesis that the Divine is everywhere and is all and therefore all is good, being Divine, they are very insufficient for that purpose. But as an experience, it is a very common thing to have this feeling or realisation in the Vedantic Sadhana—in fact, without it there would be no Vedantic Sadhana—I have had it myself on various levels of consciousness and in numerous forms and I have met scores of people who had had it very genuinely—not as an intellectual theory or perception but as a spiritual reality which was too concrete for them to deny whatever paradoxes it may entail for the ordinary intelligence.

Of course it does not mean that all here is good or that in the estimation of values a brothel is as good as an Ashram, but it does mean that all are part of one manifestation and that in the inner heart of the harlot as in the inner heart of the sage or saint there is the Divine....

15-4-1934

Absurdity of Depreciating Old Yogas

(1)

As for the depreciation of the old Yogas as something quite easy, unimportant and worthless and the depreciation of Buddha, Yajnavalkya and other great spiritual figures of the past, is it not evidently absurd on the face of it?

14-4-1936

(2)

Wonderful! The realisation of the Self which includes the liberation from ego, the consciousness of the One in all, the established and consummated transcendence out of the universal Ignorance, the fixity of the consciousness in the union with the Highest, the Infinite and Eternal is not anything worth doing or recommending to anybody—is “not a very difficult stage”!

Nothing new! Why should there be anything new? The object of spiritual seeking is to find out what is eternally true, not what is new in Time.

From where did you get this singular attitude towards the old Yogas and Yogis? Is the wisdom of the Vedanta and Tantra a small and trifling thing? Have then the sadhaks of this Ashram attained to self-realisation and are they liberated Jivanmuktas, free from ego and ignorance? If not, why then do you say, "it is not a very difficult stage", "their goal is not high", "Is it such a long process?"

I have said that this Yoga is "new" because it aims at the integrality of the Divine in this world and not only beyond it and at a supramental realisation. But how does that justify a superior contempt for the spiritual realisation which is as much the aim of this Yoga as of any other?

3-4-1936

Estimate of Sri Ramakrishna

I would have been surprised to hear that I regard (in agreement with an "advanced" sadhak) Ramakrishna as a spiritual pigmy if I had not become past astonishment in these matters. I have said, it seems, so many things that were never in my mind and done too not a few that I have never

dreamed of doing! I shall not be surprised or perturbed if one day I am reported to have declared, on the authority of "advanced" or even unadvanced sadhaks, that Buddha was a *poseur* or that Shakespeare an overrated poetaster or Newton a third-rate college Don without any genius. In this world all is possible. Is it necessary for me to say that I have never thought and cannot have said anything of the kind, since I have at least some faint sense of spiritual values? The passage you have quoted¹ is my considered estimate of Sri Ramakrishna.

3-2-1932

Sri Aurobindo and the Vedic Rishis

Q: In a review-article on your book "The Riddle of this World", a Swami has remarked that you have

¹ "And in a recent unique example, in the life of Ramakrishna Paramhansa, we see a colossal spiritual capacity first driving straight to the divine realisation, taking, as it were, the kingdom of heaven by violence and then seizing upon one Yogic method after another and extracting the substance out of it with an incredible rapidity, always to return to the heart of the whole matter, the realisation and possession of God by the power of love, by the extension of inborn spirituality into various experience and by the spontaneous play of an intuitive knowledge." (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, Arya, Vol. I, p. 303.)

the boldness to say that you have done what the Vedic Rishis could not do. What is the truth in this criticism?

A: It is not I only who have done what the Vedic Rishis did not do. Chaitanya and others developed an intensity of Bhakti which is absent in the Veda and many other instances can be given. Why should the past be the limit of spiritual experience?

19-12-1934

Krishna and Physical Transformation

Sri Krishna never set out to arrive at any physical transformation, so anything of the kind could not be expected in his case.

Neither Buddha nor Shankara nor Ramakrishna had any idea of transforming the body. Their aim was spiritual mukti and nothing else. Krishna taught Arjuna to be liberated in works, but he never spoke of any physical transformation.

I do not know that we can take this (Yudhishthira entering the heavenly kingdom in the Himalayas with his mortal body) as a historical fact. *Svarga* is not somewhere in the Himalayas, it is another

world in another plane of consciousness and substance. Whatever the story may mean, therefore, it has nothing to do with the question of physical transformation on earth.

I-6-1937

Krishna and the Supermind

24th (November 1926) was the descent of Krishna into the physical.

Krishna is not the Supramental Light. The descent of Krishna would mean the descent of the Overmind Godhead preparing, though not itself actually, the descent of Supermind and Ananda. Krishna is the Anandamaya; he supports the evolution through the Overmind leading it towards the Ananda.

29-10-1935

Sri Aurobindo and Krishna

(I)

You can't expect me to argue about my own spiri-

tual greatness in comparison with Krishna's. The question itself would be relevant only if there were two sectarian religions in opposition, Aurobindoism and Vaishnavism, each insisting on its own God's greatness. That is not the case. And then what Krishna must I challenge,—the Krishna of the Gita who is the transcendent Godhead, Paramatma, Parabrahma, Purushottama, the cosmic Deity, Master of the universe, Vasudeva who is all, the Immanent in the heart of all creatures, or the Godhead who was incarnate at Brindavan and Dwarka and Kurukshetra and who was the guide of my Yoga and with whom I realised identity? All that is not to me something philosophical or mental but a matter of daily and hourly realisation and intimate to the stuff of my consciousness. Then from what position can I adjudicate this dispute? X thinks I am superior in greatness, you think there can be nothing greater than Krishna: each is entitled to have his own view or [feeling, whether it is itself right or not. It can be left there; it can be no reason for your leaving the Ashram.

25-2-1945

(2)

I thought I had already told you that your turn towards Krishna was not an obstacle. In any case, I affirm that positively in answer to your question. If we consider the large and indeed predominant part he played in my own sadhana, it would be strange if the part he has in your sadhana could be considered objectionable. Sectarianism is a matter of dogma, ritual, etc., not of spiritual experience; the concentration on Krishna is a self-offering to the *Ishta-deva*. If you reach Krishna you reach the Divine; if you can give yourself to him, you give yourself to me. Your inability to identify may be because you are laying too much stress on the physical aspects, consciously or unconsciously.

18-6-1943

Krishna and Christ

I feel it difficult to say anything about R's Christ and Krishna. The attraction which she says people feel for Christ has never touched me, partly because I got disgusted with the dryness and deadness of

Christianity in England and partly because the Christ of the gospels (apart from a few pregnant episodes) is luminous no doubt, but somewhat shadowy and imperfectly constructed in his luminosity: there is more of the ethical put forward than of the spiritual or divine man. The Christ that has strongly lived in the Western saints and mystics is the Christ of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Teresa and others. But apart from that, is it a fact that Christ has been strongly and vividly loved by Christians? Only by a very few, it seems to me. As for Krishna, to judge him and his revealing tradition by the Christ figure and Christ tradition is not possible. The two stand in two different worlds. There is nothing in Christ of the great and boundless and sovereign spiritual knowledge and power of realisation we find in the Gita, nothing of the emotional force, passion, beauty of the Gopi-symbol and all that lies behind it, nothing of the many-sided manifestation of the Krishna figure. Christ has other qualities: there is no gain in putting them side by side and trying to weigh them against each other. That is the besetting sin of the Christian mind, even in those who are most liberal like Dr. Stanley Jones: they cannot get altogether free from the sectarian narrowness and leave each manifestation to its own inner world for those to follow who have an inner drawing

to the one or the other. I have always refrained from these comparisons in my published writings in order to avoid this error. What I feel personally is for myself—I cannot ask others to conform to my measure.

4-1-1936

IV

SADHANA FOR THE EARTH- CONSCIOUSNESS

The Supramental and the Truth

The Truth manifesting on all the planes is one thing, the Supramental is another, although it is the source of all Truth.

29-8-1936

Object of Seeking the Supermind

These egoistic terms are not those in which my vital moves. It is a higher Truth I seek, whether it makes men greater or not is not the question, but whether it will give them truth and peace and light to live in and make life something better than a struggle with ignorance and falsehood and pain and strife. Then, even if they are less great than the men of the past, my object will have been achieved. For me mental conceptions cannot be

the end of all things. I know that the 'Supermind is a truth.

It is not for personal greatness that I am seeking to bring down the Supermind. I care nothing for greatness or littleness in the human sense. I am seeking to bring some principle of inner Truth, Light, Harmony, Peace into the earth-consciousness; I see it above and know what it is—I feel it ever gleaming down on my consciousness from above and I am seeking to make it possible for it to take up the whole being into its own native power, instead of the nature of man continuing to remain in half-light, half-darkness. I believe the descent of this Truth opening the way to a development of divine consciousness here to be the final sense of the earth evolution. If greater men than myself have not had this vision and this ideal before them, that is no reason why I should not follow my Truth-sense and Truth-vision. If human reason regards me as a fool for trying to do what Krishna did not try, I do not in the least care. There is no question of X or Y or anybody else in that. It is a question between the Divine and myself—whether it is the Divine Will or not, whether I am sent to bring that down or open the way for its descent or at least make it more possible or not. Let all men jeer at me if they will or all Hell fall upon

me if it will for my presumption,—I go on till I conquer or perish. This is the spirit in which I seek the Supermind, no hunting for greatness for myself or others.

10-2-1935

Process of Supramental Descent

(I)

No, the Supramental has not descended into the body or into Matter—it is only at the point where such a descent has become not only possible but inevitable; I am speaking, of course, of my experience. But as my experience is the centre and condition of all the rest, that is sufficient for the promise.

My difficulty is that you all seem to expect a kind of miraculous fairy-tale change and do not realise that it is a rapid and concentrated evolution which is the aim of my sadhana and that there must be a process for it, a working of the higher in the lower and a dealing with all the necessary intervals—not a sudden feat of creation by which everything is done on a given date. It is a supramental but not an irra-

tional process. What is to be done will happen—perhaps with a rush even—but in a workmanlike way and not according to Faerie.

14-II-1933

Conditions for Supramentalisation

I have no intention of achieving the Supermind for myself only—I am not doing anything for myself, as I have no personal need of anything, neither of salvation (Moksha) nor supramentalisation. If I am seeking after supramentalisation, it is because it is a thing that has to be done for the earth-consciousness and if it is not done in myself, it cannot be done in others. My supramentalisation is only a key for opening the gates of the Supramental to the earth-consciousness; done for its own sake, it would be perfectly futile. But it does not follow either that if or when I become supramental, everybody will become supramental. Others can so become who are ready for it, when they are for it—though, of course, the achievement in myself will be to them a great help towards it. It is therefore quite legitimate to have the aspiration for it—provided:

(1) One does not make a too personal or egoistic affair of it turning it into a Nietzschean or other ambition to be superman.

(2) One is ready to undergo the conditions and stages needed for the achievement.

(3) One is sincere and regards it as a part of the seeking of the Divine and consequent culmination of the Divine Will in one and insists on no more than the fulfilment of that will whatever it may be, psychicisation, spiritualisation or supramentalisation. It should be regarded as the fulfilment of God's working in the world, not as a personal chance or achievement.

April, 1935

Sri Aurobindo and the Supermind

I don't know that I have called myself a Superman. But certainly I have risen above the ordinary human mind, otherwise I would not think of trying to bring down the Supermind into the physical.

15-9-1935

Ananda on Earth

My own experience is *not* limited to a 'radiant peace'; I know very well what ecstasy and Ananda are from the Brahmananda down to the Sharira Ananda, and can experience them at any time. But of these things I prefer to speak only when my work is done—for it is in a transformed consciousness here and not only above where the Ananda always exists that I seek their base of permanence.

Place of Humanity in Sri Aurobindo's Work

(I)

But you are surely mistaken in thinking that I said that we work spiritually for the relief of the poor. I have never done that. My work is not to intervene in social matters with the frame of the present humanity but to bring down a higher spiritual light and power of a higher character which will make a radical change in the earth-consciousness.

22-12-1936

(2)

As to the extract about Vivekananda,¹ the point I make there does not seem to me humanitarian. You will see that I emphasise there the last sentences of the page quoted from Vivekananda, not the words about God the poor and sinner and criminal. The point is about the Divine in the world, the All, *sarva-bhūtāni* of the Gita. That is not merely humanity, still less, only the poor or the wicked; surely, even the rich or the good are the part of the All and those also who are neither good nor bad nor rich nor poor. Nor is there any question (I mean in my own remarks) of philanthropic service; so neither *daridrer sevā* is the point. I had formerly not the humanitarian but the humanity view—and something of it may have stuck to my expressions in the *Arya*. But I had already

¹ "I have lost all wish for my salvation, may I be born again and again and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum-total of all souls,—and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species is the special object of my worship. He who is the high and low, the saint and the sinner, the god and the worm, Him worship, the visible, the knowable, the real, the omnipresent; break all other idols. In whom there is neither past life nor future birth, nor death nor going nor coming, in whom we always have been and always will be one, Him worship; break all other idols."

Vivekananda, quoted in *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Part I, p. 275.

altered my view-point from the "Our Yoga for the sake of humanity" to "Our Yoga for the sake of the Divine". The Divine includes not only the supracosmic but the cosmic and the individual—not only Nirvana or the Beyond but Life and the *Ali*. It is that I stress everywhere.

29-12-1934

(3)

I can say little about the method K speaks of for getting rid of dead concepts. Each mind has its own way of moving. My own has been a sort of readjustment or rectification of positions and I should rather call it discrimination accompanied by a rearrangement of intuitions. At one time I had given much too big a place to "humanity" in my scheme of things with a number of ideas attached to that exaggeration which needed to be put right. But the change did not come by doubt about what I had conceived before, but by a new light on things in which "humanity" automatically stepped down and got into its right place and all the rest rearranged itself in consequence. But all that is

probably because I am constitutionally lazy (in spite of my present feats of correspondence) and prefer the easiest and most automatic method possible. I have a suspicion however that K's method is essentially the same as mine, only he does it in a more diligent and conscientious spirit. For his remark about the concepts as flags and not the means of advance seems to indicate that.

26-10-1934

The Burden of Love

(1)

It is only divine Love which can bear the burden I have to bear, that all have to bear who have sacrificed everything else to the one aim of uplifting earth out of its darkness towards the Divine. The Gallio-like "Je m'en fiche"-ism (I do not care)—would not carry me one step; it would certainly not be divine. It is quite another thing that enables me to walk unweeping and unlamenting towards the goal.

April, 1934

(2)

I use the language of the mind because there is no other which human beings can understand,—even though most of them understand it badly. If I were to use a supramental language like Joyce, you would not even have the illusion of understanding it; so, not being an Irishman, I don't make the attempt. But, of course, anyone who wants to change earth-nature must first accept it in order to change it. To quote from an unpublished poem¹ of my own:

He who would bring the heavens here,
Must descend himself into clay
And the burden of earthly nature bear
And tread the dolorous way.....

25-8-1935

The Plunge in the Abyss

No, it is not with the Empyrean that I am busy: I wish it were. It is rather with the opposite end of

¹ "A God's Labour" subsequently published in *Poems Past and Present* by Sri Aurobindo.

things; it is in the Abyss that I have to plunge to build a bridge between the two. But that too is necessary for my work and one has to face it.

30-5-1936

The Help of Difficulties

As for faith, you write as if I never had a doubt or any difficulty. I have had worse than any human mind can think of. It is not because I have ignored difficulties, but because I have seen them more clearly, experienced them on a larger scale than anyone living now or before me that, having faced and measured them, I am sure of the results of my work. But even if I still saw the chance that it might come to nothing (which is impossible), I would go on unperturbed, because I would still have done to the best of my power the work that I had to do, and what is so done always counts in the economy of the universe. But why should I feel that all this may come to nothing when I see each step and where it is leading and every week and day—once it was every year and month and hereafter it will be every day and hour—brings me so much nearer to my

goal? In the way that one treads with the greater Light above, even every difficulty gives its help and has its value and Night itself carries in it the burden of the Light that has to be.

December, 1933

Life of Struggle and Battle

But what strange ideas again!—that I was born with a supramental temperament and that I know nothing of hard realities! Good God! My whole life has been a struggle with hard realities, from hardships, starvation in England and constant dangers and fierce difficulties to the far greater difficulties continually cropping up here in Pondicherry, external and internal. My life has been a battle from its early years and is still a battle: the fact that I wage it now from a room upstairs and by spiritual means as well as others that are external makes no difference to its character. But, of course, as we have not been shouting about these things, it is natural, I suppose, for others to think that I am living in an august, glamorous, lotus-eating dreamland where

no hard facts of life or Nature present themselves. But what an illusion all the same!

Storms and the Sunlit Way

I quite agree with you in not relishing the idea of another attack of this nature. I am myself, I suppose, more a hero by necessity than by choice—I do not love storms and battles, at least on the subtle plane. The sunlit way may be an illusion,—though I do not think it is,—for I have seen people treading it for years; but a way with only natural or even only moderate fits of rough weather, a way without typhoons surely is possible—there are so many examples; *durgam pathastat* may be generally true and certainly the path of Laya or Nirvana is difficult in the extreme to most (although in my case I walked into Nirvana without intending it or rather Nirvana walked casually into me not so far from the beginning of my Yogic career without asking my leave). But the path need not be cut by periodical violent storms, though that it is so for a great many is an obvious fact. But even for these if they stick to it, I find that after a certain point the storms diminish in force, frequency, duration. That is why I insisted

so much on your sticking—for if you stick, the turning-point is bound to come. I have seen some astonishing instances recently of this typhoonic periodicity beginning to fade out after years and years of violent recurrence.

11-2-1937

The Gospel of Faith

Fits of depression and darkness and despair are a tradition in the path of sadhana—in all Yogas, oriental or occidental, they seem to have been the rule. I know all about them myself—but my experience has led me to the perception that they are an unnecessary tradition and could be dispensed with if one chose. That is why whenever they come in you or others I try to lift up before them the gospel of faith. If still they come, one has to get through them as soon as possible and get back into the sun.

9-4-1930

The Adversary's Exaggeration

There is no reason to think that the movement of strength and purity was a make-believe. No, it was a real thing. But with these strong forward movements the vital enthusiasm often comes in with a triumphant "Now it is finished" which is not quite justified, for, "Now it will be soon finished" would be nearer to it. It is at these moments that the thrice-damned Censor comes in with a jog, raises up a still shaky bit of the nature and produces a result that is out of all proportion to the size of the little bit, just to show that it is not finished. I have had any number of times that experience myself. All this comes from the complexity and slowness of our evolutionary nature which Yoga quickens, but not as a whole at a stroke. But in fact, as I said, these crises are out of all proportion to their cause in the nature. One must therefore not be discouraged, but see the exaggeration in the adversary's successful negation as well as the exaggeration in our idea of a complete and definite victory already there.

24-6-1936

Rising up of Vital Movements

The exacerbation of certain vital movements is a perfectly well-known phenomenon in Yoga and does not mean that one has degenerated, but only that one has come to close grips instead of to a pleasant nodding acquaintance with the basic instincts of the earthly vital nature. I have had myself the experience of this rising to a height, during a certain stage of the spiritual development, of things that before hardly existed and seemed quite absent in the pure Yogic life. These things rise up like that because they are fighting for their existence—they are not really personal to you and the vehemence of their attack is not due to any “badness” in the personal nature. I dare say seven sadhaks out of ten have a similar experience. Afterwards when they cannot effect their object, which is to drive the sadhak out of his sadhana, the whole thing sinks and there is no longer any vehement trouble.

24-6-1932.

Temporary Stopping of Sadhana

The worst thing for sadhana is to get into a morbid

condition, always thinking of lower forces, attacks, etc. If the sadhana has stopped for a time, then let it stop, remain quiet, do ordinary things, rest when rest is needed—wait till the physical consciousness is ready. My own sadhana when it was far more advanced than yours used to stop for half a year together. I did not make a fuss about it, but remained quiet till the empty or dull period was over.

8-3-1935

Amendment to Bergson Plan

Q: Bergson writes that the progress of Life is marked by tensions succeeded by flowerings. What do you think of that, since the great philosopher too agrees with our way of marching to Beatitude through struggles and sufferings?

A: Humph! Such a method is all very well, but one has so much of it in life and in this Ashram that I yearn for some other non-Bergsonian evolution. Even if Lord God and Bergson planned it together, I would move an amendment.

Impossibility of Fixing Precise Dates

I am surprised at Tagore's remark¹ about the two years; he must have misunderstood or misheard me. I did tell him that I would expand only after making a perfect (inner) foundation here, but I gave no date. I did give that date of two years long before in my letter to B, but I had then a less ample view of the work to be done than I have now—and I am now more cautious about assigning dates than I was once. To fix a precise time is impossible except in the two regions of certitude—the pure material which is the field of mathematical certitudes and the Supramental which is the field of divine certitudes. In the planes in between where life has its word to say and things have to evolve under shock and stress, Time and Energy are too much in a flux and apt to kick against the rigour of a prefixed date or programme.

16-8-1931

¹ Tagore said to BK that Sri Aurobindo had told him in 1928 that he would "expand" after two years.

Disappointing World-Condition and New Creation

Q: I am disconcerted at what is happening in the world. Everywhere misery is rampant, people are losing faith in everything and even the intellectuals like Tagore, Russell and Rolland are clamouring for an end of the age. How is it that things should be marching headlong into a quagmire such as this? I sometimes fear that eventually you and the Mother will retire into an extra-cosmic samadhi leaving the wicked world to sink or swim as best it can. Perhaps that would be the wisest course—who knows?

A: I have no intention of doing so—even if all smashed, I would look beyond the smash to the new creation. As for what is happening in the world, it does not upset me because I knew all along that things would happen in that fashion, and as for the hopes of the intellectual idealists I have not shared them, so I am not disappointed.

10-8-1933

Effort at Supramental Intervention

I have never told you that the power that works

here is absolute at present; I have, on the contrary, told you that I am trying to make it absolute and it is for that that I want the Supermind to intervene. But to say that because it is not absolute therefore it does not exist, seems to me a logical inconsequence.

28-8-1934

Effect of Supramental Descent on Earth Life

Q: When I hear people talking about the Supramental Descent it makes me somewhat sceptic. They expect that when the Descent happens everything will soon be spiritualised and even in the most outward political life all that is now wrong will be immediately set right—and this expectation creates in them a great curiosity and flutter.

A: All that is absurd. The descent of the Supramental means only that the Power will be there in the earth-consciousness as a living force just as the thinking mental and higher mental are already there. But an animal cannot take advantage of the presence of the thinking mental Power or an undeveloped man of the presence of the higher mental Power—so too

anybody will not be able to take advantage of the presence of the Supramental Power. I have also often enough said that it will be at first for the few, not for the whole earth,—only there will be a growing influence of it on the earth life.

15-12-1934

Certitude of Supramental Advent

I have already spoken about the bad conditions of the world; the usual idea of the occultists about it is that the worse they are the more is probable the coming of an intervention or a new revelation from above. The ordinary mind cannot know—it has either to believe or disbelieve or wait and see.

As to whether the Divine seriously means something to happen, I believe it is intended. I know with absolute certitude that the Supramental is a truth and that its advent is in the very nature of things inevitable. The question is as to the when and the how. That also is decided and predestined from somewhere above; but it is here being fought out amid a rather grim clash of conflicting forces. For in the terrestrial world the predetermined result is

hidden and what we see is a whirl of possibilities and forces attempting to achieve something with the destiny of it all concealed from human eyes. This is, however, certain that a number of souls have been sent to see that it shall be now. That is the situation. My faith and will are for the now. I am speaking of course on the level of the human intelligence—mystically-rationally, as one might put it. To say more would be going beyond that line. You don't want me to start prophesying, I suppose? As a rationalist; you can't.

28-12-1934

The Plunge into the Physical

Q: What did you imply when you wrote to me: "You are in the physical consciousness"? Did you mean that I am living like an animal or vegetating like a plant and did you suggest that I should come out of the "physical consciousness" and live on the mental level?

A: I am myself living in the physical consciousness and have been for several years. At first it was a plunge into the physical—into all its obscurity and inertia, afterwards it was a station in the physical open to the higher and higher consciousness and

slowly having fought out in it the struggle of transformation of the physical consciousness with a view to prepare it for the supramental change.

It is possible to go back to the mental level where one receives all the mental realisations readily enough if the mind is open and bright. But it is not the course that the sadhana usually follows.

29-12-1934

The Way Out of the Physical Passivity

Q: Was there in me a continuous real sadhana in 1933 ? Was it not rather only a mental experience without any real solidity in it ? Otherwise why should such a fall have come during these two years ?

A: There was certainly a real sadhana then and a very persistent preparation on the mental and vital planes. If that had not been there the descent of peace would not have begun. The fall came because when you descended into the physical consciousness to complete the preparation there, you became too passive, not continuing your will of tapasya, with the result that the sex-force took advantage of the

inertia of the physical consciousness to assert itself fully. That kind of passivity to the forces comes upon many when there is the descent into the physical; one then feels different forces playing in the consciousness without having the same power of reaction as one had in the mind and the vital—sometimes peace etc. from above, sometimes disturbing forces. I had to pass through the same stage myself and it took me two years at least to get out of it. To develop in the physical itself a constant will for the drawing down of the higher consciousness—especially the Peace and Force from above, is the best way out of it.

8-7-1935

World's Readiness to Receive the Supramental

Q: I am disgusted with the world and would have preferred to go away from it to some subtler existence had it not been for your programme of changing the world and bringing some better things in it. But does the world want to change and buy your wares at the heavy cost of giving up all it is and has and does ?

A: It wants and it does not want something that it

has not got. All that the Supramental could give, the inner mind of the world would like to have, but its outer mind, its vital and physical do not like to pay the price. But, after all, I am not trying to change the world all at once but only to bring down centrally something into it it has not yet, a new consciousness and power.

31-7-1935

Action of The Supramental Truth-Power

You have created your own bewildering problem by supplying your own data! There is nothing nebulous about the Supramental; its action depends on the utmost precision possible. As for solidity, since I once have got many solid things from much lower forces, I do not see why the highest ones should only give us nebulosities. But that seems to be the human mind's position: that only what is earthy is solid, what is high must be misty and unreal—the worm is a reality, the eagle only a vapour!

However, I have not told N that I have been scaling and winging—on the contrary, I have been dealing with very hard practical facts. I only told him

I had got the formula of solution for the difficulty that had been holding me up since last November and I am working it out.

To return to the Supramental: the Supramental is simply the direct self-existent Truth-Consciousness and the direct self-effective Truth-Power. There can therefore be no question of jugglery about it. What is not true is not Supramental. As for calm and silence, there is no need of the Supramental to get that. One can get it even on the level of Higher Mind which is the next above the human intelligence. I got these things in 1908, 27 years ago, and I can assure you they were solid enough and marvellous enough in all conscience without any need of supramentality to make it more so. Again, "a calm that looks like action and motion" is a phenomenon of which I know nothing. A calm or silence that is what I have had—the proof is that out of an absolute silence of the mind I edited the *Bande Mataram* for 4 months and wrote 6 volumes of the *Arya*, not to speak of all the letters and messages etc. I have written since. If you say that writing is not an action or motion but only something that seems like it, a jugglery of the consciousness,—well, still out of that calm and silence I conducted a pretty strenuous political activity and have also taken my share in keeping up an Ashram which

has at least an appearance to the physical senses of being solid and material! If you deny that these things are material or solid (which, of course, metaphysically you can), then you land yourself plump into Shankara's Illusionism, and there I will leave you.

You will say, however, that this is not the Supramental but at most the Overmind that helped me to these non-nebulous motions and action. But the Supermind is by definition a greater dynamic activity than mind or Overmind. I have said that what is not true is not Supramental; I will add that what is ineffective is not Supramental. And, finally, I conclude by saying that I have not told N that I have taken complete possession of the Supramental—I only admit to be very near to it. But "very near" is—well, after all—a relative phrase like all human phrases.

I don't know how you are to answer R. You might perhaps by my two formulas, but it is doubtful. Or perhaps you might tell him that the Supramental was silence—only, it would be untrue! So I leave you in your fix—there is no other go. At least until I have firm physical hold of the Supramental and can come and tell the mentals and humans,—no doubt in a language which will be intelligible to them,—I must be somewhat

dumb, since they have wholly misunderstood even the little that has found voice through my writings up till now.

23-8-1935

Crossing of a Border

The last Darshan (15th August 1936) was good on the whole. I am not now trying to bring anything sensational down on these days, but I am watching the progress in the action of the Force and Consciousness that are already there, the infiltration of a greater Light and Power from above, and there was a very satisfactory crossing of a difficult border which promises well for the near future. A thing has been done which had long failed to accomplish itself and which is of great importance. I don't explain now, because it forms part of an arranged whole which is explicable only when it is complete. But it gives a sort of strong practical assurance that the thing will be done.

26-8-1936

Preparation under Veil

I know that this is a time of trouble for you and everybody. It is so for the whole world. Confusion, trouble, disorder and upset everywhere is the general state of things. The better things that are to come are preparing or growing under a veil and the worse are prominent everywhere. The one thing is to hold on and hold out till the hour of light has come.

2-6-1946

The Light of Victory

As regards Bengal, things are certainly very bad; the conditions of the Hindus there are terrible and they may even get worse in spite of the Interim *mariage de convenance* at Delhi. But we must not let our reaction to it become excessive or suggest despair. There must be at least 20 million Hindus in Bengal and they are not going to be exterminated,—even Hitler with his scientific methods of massacre could not exterminate the Jews who are still showing themselves very much alive and, as

for Hindu culture, it is not such a weak and fluffy thing as to be easily stamped out; it has lasted through something like 5 millenniums at least and is going to carry on much longer and has accumulated quite enough power to survive. What is happening did not come to me as a surprise. I foresaw it when I was in Bengal and warned people that it was probable and almost inevitable and that they should be prepared for it. At that time no one attached any value to what I said, although some afterwards remembered and admitted, when the trouble first began, that I have been right; only C. R. Das had grave apprehensions and he even told me when he came to Pondicherry that he would not like the British to go out until this dangerous problem had been settled. But I have not been discouraged by what is happening, because I know and have experienced hundreds of times that beyond the blackest darkness there lies for one who is a divine instrument the light of God's victory. I have never had a strong and persistent will for anything to happen in the world—I am not speaking of personal things—which did not eventually happen even after delay, defeat or even disaster. There was a time when Hitler was victorious everywhere and it seemed certain that a black yoke of the Asura would be imposed on the whole world;

but where is Hitler now and where is his rule? Berlin and Nuremberg have marked the end of that dreadful chapter in human history. Other blacknesses threaten to overshadow or even engulf mankind, but they too will end as that nightmare has ended. I cannot write fully in this letter of all things which justify my confidence—some day perhaps I shall be able to do it.

19-10-1946

Darkness before Dawn

The extreme acuteness of your difficulties is due to the Yoga having come down against the bed-rock of Inconscience which is the fundamental basis of all resistance in the individual and in the world to the victory of the Spirit and the Divine Work that is leading toward that victory. The difficulties themselves are general in the Ashram as well as in the outside world. Doubt, discouragement, diminution or loss of faith, waning of the vital enthusiasm for the ideal, perplexity and a baffling of the hope for the future are the common features of the difficulty. In the world outside there are much

worse symptoms such as the general increase of cynicism, a refusal to believe in anything at all, a decrease of honesty, an immense corruption, a preoccupation with food, money, comfort, pleasure, to the exclusion of higher things, and a general expectation of worse and worse things awaiting the world. All that, however acute, is a temporary phenomenon for which those who know anything about the workings of the world-energy and the workings of the Spirit were prepared. I myself foresaw that this worst would come, the darkness of night before the dawn; therefore I am not discouraged. I know what is preparing behind the darkness and can see and feel the first signs of its coming. Those who seek for the Divine have to stand firm and persist in their seeking; after a time, the darkness will fade and begin to disappear and the Light will come.

9-4-1947

The Present Effort

If I had been standing on the Supermind level and acting on the world by the instrumentation of Supermind, that world would have changed or

would be changing much more rapidly and in a different fashion from what is happening now. My present effort is not to stand up on a high and distant Supermind level and change the world from there, but to bring something of it down here and to stand on that and act by that; but at the present stage the progressive supramentalisation of the Overmind is the first immediate preoccupation and a second is the lightening of the heavy resistance of the Inconscient and the support it gives to human ignorance which is always the main obstacle in any attempt to change the world or even to change oneself. I have always said that the spiritual force I have been putting on human affairs such as the War is not the supramental but the Overmind force, and that when it acts in the material world is so inextricably mixed up in the tangle of the lower world forces that its results, however strong or however adequate to the immediate object, must necessarily be partial. That is why I am getting a birthday present of a free India on August 15, but complicated by its being presented in two packets as two free Indias: this is a generosity I could have done without, one free India would have been enough for me if offered as an unbroken whole.

7-7-1947

Call to Remain Firm

Remain firm through the darkness; the light is there and will conquer.

4-2-1948

The Present Darkness and the New World

(1)

I am afraid I can hold out but cold comfort—for the present at least—to those of your correspondents who are lamenting the present state of things. Things are bad, are growing worse and may at any time grow worst or worse than worst if that is possible—and anything however paradoxical seems possible in the present perturbed world. The best thing for them is to realise that all this was necessary because certain possibilities had to emerge and be got rid of, if a new and better world was at all to come into being; it would not have done to postpone them for a later time. It is, as in Yoga, where things active or latent in the being have to be put into action in the light so that they may be

grappled with and thrown out or to emerge from latency in the depths for the same purificatory purpose. Also they can remember the adage that night is darkest before dawn and that the coming of dawn is inevitable. But they must remember too that the new world whose coming we envisage is not to be made of the same texture as the old and different only in pattern, and that it must come by other means—from within and not from without; so the best way is not to be too much preoccupied with the lamentable things that are happening outside, but themselves to grow within so that they may be ready for the new world, whatever form it may take.

18-7-1948

(2)

You have expressed in one of your letters your sense of the present darkness in the world round us and this must have been one of the things that contributed to your being so badly upset and unable immediately to repel the attack. For myself, the dark conditions do not discourage me or convince me of the vanity of my will to “help the world”,

for I knew they had to come; they were there in the world-nature and had to rise up so that they might be exhausted or expelled so that a better world freed from them might be there. After all, something has been done in the outer field and that may help or prepare for getting something done in the inner field also. For instance, India is free and her freedom was necessary if the divine work was to be done. The difficulties that surround her now and may increase for a time, especially with regard to the Pakistan imbroglio, were also things that had to come and to be cleared out.... Here too there is sure to be a full clearance, though unfortunately, a considerable amount of human suffering in the process is inevitable. Afterwards the work for the Divine will become more possible and it may well be that the dream, if it is a dream, of leading the world towards the spiritual light, may even become a reality. So I am not disposed even now, in these dark conditions to consider my will to help the world as condemned to failure.

4-4-1950

V

THE MASTER AND THE GUIDE

Sri Aurobindo's Teaching and Method of Sadhana

THE teaching of Sri Aurobindo starts from that of the ancient sages of India that behind the appearances of the universe there is the Reality of a Being and Consciousness, a Self of all things, one and eternal. All beings are united in that One Self and Spirit but divided by a certain separativity of consciousness, an ignorance of their true Self and Reality in the mind, life and body. It is possible by a certain psychological discipline to remove this veil of separative consciousness and become aware of the true Self, the Divinity within us and all.

Sri Aurobindo's teaching states that this One Being and Consciousness is involved here in Matter. Evolution is the method by which it liberates itself; consciousness appears in what seems to be inconscient, and once having appeared is self-impelled to grow higher and higher and at the same time to

enlarge and develop towards a greater and greater perfection. Life is the first step of this release of consciousness; mind is the second; but the evolution does not finish with mind, it awaits a release into something greater, a consciousness which is spiritual and supramental. The next step of the evolution must be towards the development of Supermind and Spirit as the dominant power in the conscious being. For only then will the involved Divinity in things release itself entirely and it become possible for life to manifest perfection.

But while the former steps in evolution were taken by Nature without a conscious will in the plant and animal life, in man Nature becomes able to evolve by a conscious will in the instrument. It is not, however, by the mental will in man that this can be wholly done, for the mind goes only to a certain point and after that can only move in a circle. A conversion has to be made, a turning of the consciousness by which mind has to change into the higher principle. This method is to be found through the ancient psychological discipline and practice of Yoga. In the past, it has been attempted by a drawing away from the world and a disappearance into the height of the Self or Spirit. Sri Aurobindo teaches that a descent of the higher principle is possible which will not merely release

the spiritual Self out of the world, but release it in the world, replace the mind's ignorance or its very limited knowledge by a supramental truth-consciousness which will be a sufficient instrument of the inner Self and make it possible for the human being to find himself dynamically as well as inwardly and grow out of his still animal humanity into a diviner race. The psychological discipline of Yoga can be used to that end by opening all the parts of the being to a conversion or transformation through the descent and working of the higher still concealed supramental principle.

This, however, cannot be done at once or in a short time or by any rapid or miraculous transformation. Many steps have to be taken by the seeker before the supramental descent is possible. Man lives mostly in his surface mind, life and body, but there is an inner being within him with greater possibilities to which he has to awake—for it is only a very restricted influence from it that he receives now and that pushes him to a constant pursuit of a greater beauty, harmony, power and knowledge. The first process of Yoga is therefore to open the ranges of this inner being and to live from there outward, governing his outward life by an inner light and force. In doing so he discovers in himself his true soul which is not this

outer mixture of mental, vital and physical elements but something of the Reality behind them, a spark from the one Divine Fire. He has to learn to live in his soul and purify and orientate by its drive towards the Truth the rest of the nature. There can follow afterwards an opening upward and descent of a higher principle of the Being. But even then it is not at once the full supramental Light and Force. For there are several ranges of consciousness between the ordinary human mind and the supramental Truth-Consciousness. These intervening ranges have to be opened up and their power brought down into the mind, life and body. Only afterwards can the full power of the Truth-Consciousness work in the nature. The process of this self-discipline or sadhana is therefore long and difficult, but even a little of it is so much gained because it makes the ultimate release and perfection more possible.

There are many things belonging to older systems that are necessary on the way—an opening of the mind to a greater wideness and to the sense of the Self and the Infinite, an emergence into what has been called the cosmic consciousness, mastery over the desires and passions; an outward asceticism is not essential, but the conquest of desire and attachment and a control over the body and its needs,

greeds and instincts are indispensable. There is a combination of the principles of the old systems, the way of knowledge through the mind's discernment between Reality and the appearance, the heart's way of devotion, love and surrender and the way of works turning the will away from motives of self-interest to the Truth and the service of a greater Reality than the ego. For the whole being has to be trained so that it can respond and be transformed when it is possible for that greater Light and Force to work in the nature.

In this discipline, the inspiration of the Master, and in the difficult stages his control and his presence are indispensable—for it would be impossible otherwise to go through it without much stumbling and error which would prevent all chance of success. The Master is one who has risen to a higher consciousness and being and he is often regarded as its manifestation or representative. He not only helps by his teaching and still more by his influence and example but by a power to communicate his own experience to others.

This is Sri Aurobindo's teaching and method of practice. It is not his object to develop any one religion or to amalgamate the older religions or to found any new religion—for any of these things would lead away from his central purpose. The

one aim of his Yoga is an inner self-développement by which each one who follows it can in time discover the One Self in all and evolve a higher consciousness than the mental, a spiritual and supramental consciousness which will transform and divinise human nature.

August, 1934

Free Choice of the Truth

If the Truth I bring is too great for you to understand or to bear, you are free to go and live in a half-truth or in your own ignorance; I am not here to convert anyone; I do not preach to the world to come to me and I call no one. I am here to establish the divine life and the divine consciousness in those who of themselves feel the call to come to me and cleave to it and in no others. I am not asking you and the Mother is not asking you to accept us. You can go any day and live either the worldly life or a religious life according to your own preference. But as you are free, so also are others free to stay here and follow their own way. You are not entitled to try to make yourself a centre of disturbance and

an obstacle to their peace and their spiritual progress.

23-10-1929

Conditions of Acceptance

(1)

If he wishes to accept my Yoga the conditions are a steady resolve and aspiration towards the truth I am bringing down, a calm passivity and an opening upward towards the source from which the light is coming. The Shakti is already working in him and if he takes and keeps this attitude and has a complete confidence in me, there is no reason why he should not advance safely in the sadhana.

9-12-1922

(2)

As for the Zamindar he seems to expect some *diksha* of the traditional kind from me, but this I

cannot give. He will have to be told that I do not and that my method is different. It may be a little difficult to explain to him or for him to understand what it is. Perhaps he may be told that those who come to have the Yoga are not accepted at once and there is sometimes a long period of trial before they are. We can see how he takes it and decide afterwards if he persists in his desire to come here.

11-7-1949

(3)

If he had a true Yogic capacity it would be different, but we see no trace of it. Tell him he needs another kind of guidance—he will not be able to stand this Yoga.

It is not possible for me to give him help and guidance—for that would mean an Influence put on him and in the present stage of his development he has not the necessary strength and balance to receive it and bear it.

I have said he cannot do this Yoga. He needs something else that he can assimilate.

4-7-1936

(4)

If I said only things that human nature finds easy and natural, that would certainly be very comfortable for the disciples, but there would be no room for spiritual aim or endeavour. Spiritual aims and methods are not easy or natural (e.g., as quarrelling, sex-indulgence, greed, indolence, acquiescence in all imperfections are easy and natural,) and if people become disciples, they are supposed to follow spiritual aims and endeavours, however hard and above ordinary nature and not the things that are easy and natural.

3-5-1937

Correspondence with Sadhaks

(1)

About the correspondence, I would be indeed a brainless fool if I made it the central aim of my life to con an absurd mountain of letters and leave all higher aims aside! If I have given importance to the correspondence, it is because it was an effec-

tive instrument towards my central purpose—there are a large number of sadhaks whom it has helped to awaken from lethargy and begin to tread the way of spiritual experience, others whom it has carried from a small round of experience to a flood of realisations, some who have been absolutely hopeless for years who have undergone a conversion and entered from darkness into an opening of light. Others no doubt have not profited or profited only a little. Also there were some who wrote at random and wasted our time. But I think we can say that for the majority of those who wrote there has been a real progress. No doubt also it was not the correspondence in itself but the Force that was increasing in its pressure on the physical nature which was able to do all this, but a canalisation was needed, and this served the purpose. There were many for whom it was not necessary, others for whom it was not suitable. If it had been a mere intellectual asking of questions it would have been useless, but the substantial part was about sadhana and experience and it is that that proved to be of great use.

But as time went on the correspondence began to grow too much and reached impossible proportions, yet it was difficult to stop the flood or to make distinctions which would not have been

understood; so we have to seek a way out and as yet have only found palliatives. The easy way would be if those who have opened would now rely on the inner communication with only a necessary word now and then—some have begun to do so. I suppose in the end we shall be able to reduce the thing to manageable proportions.

12-I-1934

(2)

I do not understand your point about raising up a new race by my going on writing 'trivial' letters ten hours a day. Of course not—nor by writing important letters either; even if I were to spend my time writing fine poems it would not build up a new race. Each activity is important in its own place—an electron or a molecule or a grain may be small things in themselves, but in their place they are indispensable to the building up of a world; it cannot be made up only of mountains and sunsets and streamings of the aurora borealis—though these have their place there. All depends on the force behind these things and the purpose in their

action—and that is known to the Cosmic Spirit which is at work; and it works, I may add, not by the mind or according to human standards but by a greater consciousness which, starting from an electron, can build up a world and, using a tangle of ganglia, can make them the base here for the works of the Mind and Spirit in Matter, produce a Ramakrishna, or a Napoleon, or a Shakespeare. Is the life of a great poet either made up only of magnificent and important things? How many trivial things had to be dealt with and done before there could be produced a *King Lear* or a *Hamlet*? Again, according to your own reasoning, would not people be justified in mocking at your pother—so they would call it, I do not—about metre and scansion and how many ways a syllable can be read? Why, they might say, is he wasting his time in trivial prosaic things like this when he might have been spending it in producing a beautiful lyric or fine music? But the worker knows and respects the material with which he must work and he knows why he is busy with ‘trifles’ and small details and what is their place in the fullness of his labour.

December, 1933

(3)

But I do not understand how all that can prevent me from answering mental questions. On my own showing, if it is necessary for the Divine purpose, it has to be done. Sri Ramakrishna himself answered thousands of questions, I believe. But the answers must be such as he gave and such as I try to give, answers from higher spiritual experience, from a deeper source of knowledge and not lucubrations of the logical intellect trying to co-ordinate its ignorance. Still less can there be a placing of the Divine Truth before the judgments of the intellect to be condemned or acquitted by that authority, for that authority has no sufficient jurisdiction or competence.

(4)

Q: Is it not true that the letters we receive from you are full of power?

A: Yes, power is put into them.

(5)

Q: It seems as if those who are not writing to you

daily are not worse off for it. What is that due to ?

A: Either they have not that same push for the sadhana or they feel less need to lay open their difficulties because they have some line of positive experience which they confidently follow.

24-9-1933

(6)

Q: Even for those who do not write to you often and confidently follow a line of positive experience, is there not the danger of wrong suggestions and constructions coming to them and also of an absence of variety or integrality of experience ?

A: Yes, there are both these dangers. Those even who are not visited by serious difficulties, are exposed to the latter danger of remaining always in the same plane of experience. But again many do not write because they are not yet prepared for the pressure on them to progress rapidly which that would mean.

25-9-1933

Help through Writing and Inner Help

What I write usually helps only the mind and that too very little, for people do not really understand what I write—they put their own constructions on it. The inner help is quite different and there can be no confusion with it, for it reaches the substance of the consciousness, not the mind only.

Spiritual Change and the School-Master Method

I never point out to anybody his defects unless he gives me the occasion. A sadhak must become conscious and lay himself before the light, see and reject and change. It is not the right method for us to interfere and lecture and point out this and point out that. That is the school-master method—it does not work in the spiritual change.

10-5-1936

Shutting up Doors against Help

I am not aware of refusing help; but to receive

the help is also necessary. When you are in this condition you seem at once to shut yourself against those from whom you seek help by a spirit of bitterness and anger. That is not an attitude which makes it easy to receive or be conscious and it is not easy either for the help to be effective. All I can do is to send you the Force that if received would help you to change your condition; it is what I have always done. But it cannot act effectively—or at least not at once—if the doors are shut against it.

Sri Aurobindo's Touch

(1)

My touch is always there; but you must learn to feel it not only with the outward contact as a medium—a touch of the pen—but in its direct action on the mind and heart and vital and body. There would then be very much less difficulty—or no difficulty at all.

27-3-1933

(2)

The outward touch is helpful; but the inward is

still more helpful when one is accustomed to receive it with a certain concreteness—and the outward touch is not always fully possible, while the inward can be there all the time.

Impersonal Approach and Personal Touch

Well, what I am considering is this, whether it would not be wiser, as far as concerns England or America, to start impersonally with the philosophical side and the side of the Yoga, and leave the person a little behind the scene, for the present, until people there are ready as individuals for the personal touch; that is the course we have been following up to now. In India it is different,* for here there is another kind of general mentality and there is the tradition of the Guru and the Shishya.

May, 1943

Sri Aurobindo's Compassion

Q: Why is the flower symbolising your compassion so delicate and why does it wither away so soon?

A: My compassion does not wither with its symbol. Flowers are the moment's representations of things that are in themselves eternal.

9-8-1936

Work and Time

(1)

You do not realise that I have to spend 12 hours over the ordinary correspondence, numerous reports, etc. I work 3 hours in the afternoon and the whole night up to 6 in the morning over this. So if I get a long letter with many questions I may not be able to answer it all at once. To get into such a disturbance over it and want to throw off the Yoga is quite unreasonable.

17-6-1933

(2)

As to the book, I am afraid I have no time for such things. The twenty-four hours are already too short for what I have to do.

3-9-1930

Reasons for Retirement

(I)

My retirement is nothing new, even the cessation of contact by correspondence is nothing new,—it has been there now for a long time. I had to establish the rule not out of personal preference or likes or dislikes, but because the correspondence occupied the greater part of my time and energies and there was a danger of my real work remaining neglected or undone if I did not change my course and devote myself to it, while the actual results of the outer activity were very small—it cannot be said that it resulted in the Ashram making a great spiritual progress. Now in these times of world-crisis when I have to be on guard and concentrated all the time to prevent irremediable catastrophes and have still to be so, and when, besides, the major movement of the inner spiritual work needs an equal concentration and persistence, it is not possible for me to abandon my rule. (Moreover, even for the individual sadhak it is in *his* interest that this major spiritual work should be done, for its success would create conditions under which his difficulties could be much more easily overcome.) All the same I have broken my rule, and broken it for you alone: I do not see

how that can be interpreted as a want of love and a hard granite indifference.

29-5-1942

(2)

No, there is no obligation of gloom, harshness, austerity or lonely grandeur in this Yoga. If I am living in my room, it is not out of passion for solitude, and it would be ridiculous to put forward this purely external circumstance as if it were the obligatory sign of a high advance in the Yoga or solitude the aim. So you need not be anxious; solitude is not demanded of you.

1932

(3)

I have no intention, I can assure you, of cutting off connection in the future. What restrictions there have been, were due to unavoidable causes. My retirement itself was indispensable; otherwise I would not be now where I am, that is, personally, near the goal. When the goal is reached, it will be different. If you had an unprecedented peace for

so long a time, it was due to my persistent inner pressure; I refuse to give up all the credit to my double, Krishna.

14-8-1945

(4)

The psychic is not responsible for my aloofness or retirement—it is the mass of opposition that I have to face which is responsible for that. It is only when I have overcome by the aid of the psychic and (excuse me!) your other *bête noire*, the Supermind, that the retirement can cease.

(5)

Q: I pray for Sri Aurobindo's darshan once more before I leave. I know that it is against the rule but I hope you won't mind relaxing it for the sake of a bhakta.

A: I am afraid it is impossible. No separate personal darshan can be given at this stage—it is not a rule, it is a necessity for the work that Sri Aurobindo is doing.

17-8-1934

(6)

Q: When will you come out of your retirement?

A: That is a thing of which nothing can be said at present. My retirement had a purpose and that purpose must first be fulfilled.

25-8-1933

(7)

Q: It would be very good if you could come out to give 'darshan' once a month instead of only three times a year. Is it possible?

A: If I went out once a month, the effect of my going out would be diminished by one third.

2-3-1933

(8)

Q: Will you come out of your retirement after the Supramental Descent?

A: That will be decided after the descent.

23-9-1935

(9)

Q: Surdar Vallabhbhai asked G when you would come out and guide people. G replied that that was not to be expected. But perhaps Vallabhbhai had a meaning in his question which G did not understand.

A: Perhaps not. Vallabhbhai is not likely to understand more than others that a spiritual life can be led by me without a view to a come back hereafter for the greatest good of the greatest India (or world). Tagore expected the latter and is much disappointed that I have not done it.

9-3-1935

Sri Aurobindo's Light

(1)

Q: Two days back in a dream I saw Sri Aurobindo coming towards me. His body and dress were of blue colour. Why did I see him in this colour and not any other ?

A: It is the basic light Sri Aurobindo manifests.

23-6-1933

(2)

If it is pale blue, it may be my colour. Pale lavender blue, pale but very brilliant in its own shade.

6-8-1932

(3)

It (the significance) depends on the shade of the blue. Ordinary pale blue is usually the light of the Illumined Mind or something of the Intuition. Whitish blue is Sri Aurobindo's light or Krishna's light.

(4)

There are many blues and it is difficult to say which these are. Usually the deeper blue is Higher Mind, a paler blue is Illumined Mind—whitish blue Sri Krishna's Light (also called Sri Aurobindo's Light).

(5)

The different blues mean different forces (the real blue has nothing to do with poison). The whitish

blue is specially called my light—but it does not [mean that that alone can come from me.

22-11-1933

(6)

Q: Nowadays I see Sri Aurobindo's light for most of the time but in different forms—sometimes like a big star, sometimes like a moon, sometimes like a flash of light. Why do I not see it in the same form?

A: It varies according to the circumstances. Why should it be always the same?

21-4-1933

(7)

Q: How can I receive Sri Aurobindo's light in the mind?

A: It can always come if you aspire patiently. But the basic condition, if you want that light, is to get rid of all other mental influences.

(8)

Q: What is the meaning of "to get rid of all other mental influences"? Is it this that I had better not read any other books except Sri Aurobindo's or not try to learn anything by hearing or admiring others?

A: It is not a question of books or learning facts. When a woman loves or admires, her mind is instinctively moulded by the one she loves or admires, and this influence remains after the feeling itself has gone or appears to be gone. This does not refer to X's influence merely. It is the general rule given to keep yourself free from any other admiration or influence.

30-5-1932

(9)

Q: As one approaches your photograph in the Reception Room, there is a feeling that it is an emanation of yours. There seems to be a special light in it.

A: The sadhaks may themselves bring this light by approaching me through the photo.

24-8-1934

Five Visions

(1)

Q: As I was sitting in prayer, I saw Sri Aurobindo in vision coming down the staircase till he came just near to the floor. What does this mean?

A: It indicates perhaps the bringing of the Divine Consciousness down from level to level till it is now near the material.

23-9-1933

(2)

Q: Today while meditating I saw in vision that in Sri Aurobindo's light Nataraja Shiva was manifesting with many hands. What does this signify?

A: It is the sign of the manifestation.

(3)

Q: Then I saw that in the sky Sri Aurobindo's light and red light were manifesting in the form of a globe. Does this signify the manifestation of Sri Aurobindo's Divine light on the physical plane?

A: Yes.

(4)

Q: Then I saw that Sri Aurobindo's light was manifesting on a sea along with another light of pale blue colour. Does this mean that in the vastness of consciousness Sri Aurobindo's Divine light is manifesting through the Intuitive Mind consciousness?

A: Yes.

15-10-1933

(5)

Q: I saw Sri Aurobindo last night in a vision seated on a chair and writing something. Behind his head there was a circular green light. What does this mean?

A: The green light is that of a dynamic vital energy (of work). As I was writing—at work—it is natural that that light should be behind my head.

5-11-1933

Action of Sri Aurobindo's Force

CERTAINLY, my force is not limited to the Ashram

and its conditions. As you know it is being largely used for helping the right development of the war and of change in the human world. It is also used for individual purposes outside the scope of the Ashram and the practice of Yoga; but that, of course, is silently done and mainly by a spiritual action. The Ashram, however, remains at the centre of the work and without the practice of Yoga the work would not exist and could not have any meaning or fruition.

13-3-1944

Concreteness of Yogic Force

Well, I made the mistake of "thinking aloud with my pen" when I wrote that unfortunate sentence¹ about the force I had put for the success of the gramophone records. As my whole action consists of the use of force,—except, of course, of my writing answers to correspondence which is concrete, but

¹ D had written to Sri Aurobindo that his gramophone records were proving a great success and were fast selling out, to which Sri Aurobindo had replied: "I am glad of that as I put much force for that result." D wrote back questioning the possibility of the force producing such a result, to which this letter is a reply.

even that I am made to do by and with a force, otherwise I can assure you I would not and could not do it,—I am sometimes imprudent enough to make this mistake. It is foolish to do so because a spiritual force or any other is obviously something invisible and its action is invisible, so how can anyone believe in it? Only the results are seen and how is one to know that the results are the result of the force? It is not concrete.

But I am myself rather puzzled by your instances of the concrete. How are the schemes of a schemer concrete? Something happens and you tell me it was the result of a schemer's scheme. But the schemer's scheme was a product of his consciousness and not at all concrete; it was in his mind and another fellow's mind is not concrete to me unless I am a Yogi or a thought-reader. I can only infer from some things he said or did that he had a scheme, things which I have not myself seen or heard and which are therefore not to me concrete. So how can I accept or believe in the scheme of the schemer? And even if I saw or heard, I am not bound to believe that it has a scheme or that which happened was the result of a scheme. He may have acted on a chain of impulses and what happened may have been the result of something quite different or itself purely accidental. Again, how did you control the

music choir? By word and signs etc. which are of course concrete. But what made you use those words and signs and why did they produce a control? And why did the other fellows do what you told them? What made them do that? It was something in your and their consciousness, I suppose; but that is not concrete. Again, scientists talk about electricity which is, it seems, an energy, a force in action and it seems that everything has been done by this energy, my own physical being is constituted by it and it is at the base of all my mental and life energies. But that is not concrete to me. I never felt my being constituted by electricity, I cannot feel it working out my thought and life-processes—so how can I believe in it or accept it? The force I use is not a sweet blessing—a blessing (silent) certainly is not concrete like a stone or a kick or other things seizable by the senses; it is not even a mere will saying within me “let it be so”—that also is not concrete. It is a force of consciousness directed towards or on persons and things and happenings—but obviously a force of consciousness is not seizable by the physical senses, so not concrete. I may feel it and the person acted on may feel it or may not feel it, but as the feeling is internal and not external and perceivable by others, it cannot be called concrete and nobody is bound to

accept or believe in it. For instance, if I cure someone (without medicines) of a fever and send him fresh and full of strength to his work, all in the course of a single night, still why should any third person believe or accept that it was my force that did it? It may have been Nature or his imagination that made him cure (three cheers for those concrete things, imagination and Nature!)—or the whole thing happened of itself. So, you see the case is hopeless, it can't be proved at all—at all.

Spiritual Strength and Rajasic Vehemence

Zeal and enthusiasm are all right and very necessary but the spiritual condition combines calm with intensity. Psychic fire is different—what you are speaking of here is the rajasic vital fire of self-exertion, aggressive self-defence, exerting lawful rights, etc.

I speak from my own experience. I have solid strength, but I have not much of the fire that blazes out against anybody who does not give me lawful rights. Yet I do not find myself weak or a dead man. I have always made it a rule not to be restless in any way, to throw away restlessness—yet I have

been able to use my solid strength whenever necessary. You speak as if rajasic force and vehemence were the only strength and all else is deadness and weakness. It is not so—the calm spiritual strength is a hundred times stronger; it does not blaze up and sink again—but is steady and unshakable and perpetually dynamic.

21-10-1933

Use of Rudra Power

I have dropped using the Rudra power; its effects used to be catastrophic, and now from a long disuse the inclination to use it has become rusty. Not that I am a convert to Satyagraha or Ahimsa: but Himsa too has its inconvenience. So the fires sleep.

Use of Spiritual Force for Curing Illnesses

(1)

As for the Force I use to cure people I shall see also whether I can explain what I mean by Force

(the one I refer to is neither Supramental nor omnipotent nor guaranteed to work like Beecham's pills in every case) and how it acts and in what conditions. I have tried it in hundreds of cases besides D's (on my own body first and always) and I have no doubt of its efficacy or reality under these conditions.

May, 1933

(2)

I have not yet written about the Force because it is too complex to be adequately stated in a short space and I had no time these days for anything long. Anyhow, the clue is that the Force does not act in a void and in an absolute way, like writing on a blank paper or on the air the : "Let there be Light and there was Light" formula. It comes as a Force intervening and acting on a very complex nexus of Forces that were in action and displacing their disposition and interrelated movement and natural result by a new disposition, movement and result.

It meets in so doing a certain opposition, very often a strong opposition from many of the forces

already in possession and operation. To overcome it three factors are needed: (1) the power of the Force itself, i.e., its own sheer pressure and direct action on the field of action (here the man, his condition, his body); (2) the instrument (yourself); and (3) the instrumentation (treatment, medicine).

I have often used the Force alone, without any human instrument or outer means, but here all depends upon the recipient and his receptivity—unless, as in the case of healers, there are unseen beings or powers that assist.

If there is an instrument in direct touch with the patient, whether the doctors or one who can canalise the Force, then the action is immensely assisted, —how much depends on the instrument, his faith, his energy, his conveying power. Where there is a violent opposition, this is frequently not enough, or at least not enough for a rapid or total effect, the instrumentation (treatment or medicine) is needed. It is especially where the resistance of the body or the forces acting on the body-consciousness is strong that the medicine comes in as an aid.

But if the doctor is non-psychic or the medicine the wrong one or the treatment unplastic, then they become added resistance which the Force has to overcome.

This is a summary and a very inadequate statement, but it gives the main points, I believe.

24-1-1936

P.S. I forgot to say that the surroundings, especially the people around the patient, the atmosphere, the suggestions it carries or they give to him, are often of a considerable importance.

(3)

I might say a word about Ramakrishna's attitude with regard to the body. He seems always to have regarded it as a misuse of spiritual force to utilise it for preserving the body or curing its ailments or taking care for it. Other Yogis—I do not speak of those who think it justifiable to develop Yogic *siddhis*—have not had this complete disregard of the body: they have taken care to maintain it in good health and condition as an instrument or a physical basis for their development in Yoga. I have always been in agreement with this view: moreover, I have never had any hesitation in the use of a spiritual force for all legitimate purposes

including the maintenance of health and physical life in myself and in others—that is indeed why the Mother gives flowers not only as a blessing but as a help in illness. I put a value on the body first as an instrument, *dharmasadhana*, or, more fully, as a centre of manifested personality in action, a basis of spiritual life and activity as of all life and activity upon the earth, but also because for me the body as well as the mind and life is a part of the Divine Whole, a form of the Spirit and therefore not to be disregarded or despised as something incurably gross and incapable of spiritual realisation or of spiritual use. Matter itself is secretly a form of the spirit and has to reveal itself as that, can be made to wake to consciousness and evolve and realise the Spirit, the Divine within it. In my view the body as well as the mind and life has to be spiritualised or, one may say, divinised so as to be a fit instrument and receptacle for the realisation of the Divine. It has its part in the Divine Lila, even, according to the Vaishnava sadhana, in the joy and beauty of Divine Love. That does not mean that the body has to be valued for its own separate sake or that the creation of a divine body in a future evolution of the whole being has to be contemplated as an end and not a means—that would be a serious error which would not be ad-

missible. In any case, my speculations about an extreme form of divinisation are something in a far distance and are no part of the preoccupations of the spiritual life in the near future.

7-12-1949

(4)

It is no doubt possible to draw the illnesses of others upon oneself and even to do it deliberately, the instance of the Greek king Antigonus and his son Dimitrius is a famous historical case in point; Yogis also do this sometimes; or else adverse forces may throw illnesses upon the Yogi, using those round him as a door or a passage or the ill wishes of people as an instrumental force. But all these are special circumstances connected, no doubt, with his practice of Yoga; but they do not establish the general proposition as an absolute rule. On the other side, there can be an opposite use and result of the Yogic consciousness: illness can be repelled from one's own body or cured, even chronic or deep-seated illnesses and long-established constitutional defects remedied or expelled and even a predestined death delayed for a long period.

Narayan Jyotishi, a Calcutta astrologer, who predicted, not knowing then who I was, in the days before my name was politically known, my struggle with Mleccha enemies and afterwards the three cases against me and my three acquittals, predicted also that though death was prefixed for me in my horoscope at the age of 63, I would prolong my life by Yogic power for a very long period and arrive at a full old age. In fact, I have got rid by Yogic pressure of a number of chronic maladies that had got settled in my body. But none of these instances either on the favourable or unfavourable side can be made into a rule; there is no validity in the tendency of human reason to transform the relativity of these things into an absolute.

8-12-1949

VI

THE POET AND THE CRITIC

Reading, Poetic Creation and Yoga

A literary man is one who loves literature and literary activities for their own separate sake. A Yogi who writes is not a literary man for he writes only what the inner Will and Word wants him to express. He is a channel and instrument of something greater than his own literary personality. Of course, the literary man and the intellectual love reading—books are their mind's food. But writing is another matter. There are plenty of people who never write a word in the literary way but are enormous readers. One reads for ideas, for knowledge, for the stimulation of the mind by all that the world has thought or is thinking. I never read in order to create. As the Yoga increased, I read very little—for when all the ideas in the world come crowding from within or from above, there is not much need for gathering mental food from outside sources; at most a utility for keeping oneself informed

of what is happening in the world,—but not as material for building up one's vision of the world and Truth and things. One becomes an independent mind in communion with the cosmic Thinker.

Poetry, even perhaps all perfect expression of whatever kind, comes by inspiration, not by reading. Reading helps only to acquire for the instrument the full possession of a language or to get the technique of literary expression. Afterwards one develops one's own use of the language, one's own style, one's own technique. It is a decade or two that I have stopped all but the most casual reading, but my power of poetic and perfect expression has increased tenfold. What I wrote with some difficulty, often with great difficulty, I now write with ease. I am supposed to be a philosopher, but I never studied philosophy—everything I wrote came from Yogic experience, knowledge and inspiration. So too my greater power over poetry and perfect expression was acquired in these last days not by reading and seeing how other people wrote, but from the heightening of my consciousness and the greater inspiration that came from the heightening.

Reading and painstaking labour are good for the literary man but even for him they are not the cause of his good writing, only an aid to it. The cause is within himself. As to 'natural', I don't

know. Sometimes when the talent is inborn and ready for expression, they can call it natural. Sometimes it awakes from within afterwards from a till then hidden nature.

11-9-1934

Natural Growth of Intelligence

It was not any such thing before I started the Yoga. I started the Yoga in 1904 and all my work except some poetry was done afterwards. Moreover, my intelligence was inborn and so far as it grew before the Yoga, it was not by training but by a wide haphazard activity developing ideas from all things read, seen or experienced. That is not training, it is natural growth.

Opening of the Artistic Eye

Don't be desperate about your incapacity as a connoisseur of painting. I was far worse in this respect: knew something about sculpture, but blind to painting. Suddenly one day in the Alipore

jail while meditating I saw some pictures on the walls of the cell and lo and behold! the artistic eye in me opened and I knew all about painting except of course the more material side of the technique. I don't always know how to express though, because I lack the knowledge of the proper expressions, but that does not stand in the way of a keen and understanding appreciation. So, there you are: all things are possible in Yoga.

Pressure of Creative Formation

I know very well this pressure of a creative formation to express itself and be fulfilled. When it presses like that there is nothing to do but to let it have its way, so as to leave the mind unoccupied and clear; otherwise it will be pushed two ways and would not be in the condition of ease necessary for concentration.

Inspiration and Technique

You do not need at all to afflict your inspiration by

studying metrical technique—you have all the technique you need, within you. I have *never* studied prosody myself—in English, at least; what I know I know by reading and writing and following my ear and using my intelligence. If one is interested in the technical study of prosody for its own sake, that is another matter—but it is not at all indispensable.

28-4-1934

Spiritual Value of Poetry

It won't do to put excessive and sweeping constructions on what I write, otherwise it is easy to misunderstand its real significance. I said there was no reason why poetry of a spiritual character (not any poetry like Verlaine's or Swinburne's or Baudelaire's) should bring no realisation at all. This did not mean that poetry is a major means of realisation of the Divine. I did not say that it would lead us to the Divine or that anyone had achieved the Divine through poetry or that poetry by itself can lead us straight into the sanctuary. Obviously, if such exaggerations are put into my words, they become absurd and untenable.

My statement is perfectly clear and there is nothing in it against reason or common sense. The Word has power—even the ordinary written word has a power. If it is an inspired word it has still more power. What kind of power or power for what depends on the nature of the inspiration and the theme and the part of the being it touches. If it is the Word itself,—as in certain utterances of the great Scriptures, Veda, Upanishads, Gita, it may well have a power to awaken a spiritual and uplifting impulse, even certain kinds of realisation. To say that it cannot contradict spiritual experience.

The Vedic poets regarded their poetry as *Mantras*, they were the vehicles of their own realisations and could become vehicles of realisation for others. Naturally, these mostly would be illuminations, not the settled and permanent realisation that is the goal of Yoga—but they could be steps on the way or at least lights on the way. I have had in former times many illuminations, even initial realisations while meditating on verses of the Upanishads or the Gita. Anything that carries the Word, the Light in it, spoken or written, can light this fire within, open a sky, as it were, bring the effective vision of which the Word is the body. You yourself know that some of your poems deeply moved people who had the tendency towards spiritual things.

Many have got openings into realisation while reading passages of the *Arya*—which are not poetry, have not the power of spiritual poetry—but it shows all the more that the word is not without power even for the things of the spirit. In all ages spiritual seekers have expressed their aspirations or their experiences in poetry or inspired language and it has helped them and others. Therefore there is nothing absurd in my assigning to such poetry a spiritual or psychic value and effectiveness of a psychic or spiritual character.

Poetry and Yoga

(1)

Literature and art are or can be a first introduction to the inner being—the inner mind, vital; for it is from there that they come. And if one writes poems of bhakti, poems of divine seeking, etc., or creates music of that kind, it means that there is a bhakta or seeker inside who is supporting himself by that self-expression. There is also the point of view behind Lele's answer to me when I told him that I wanted to do Yoga but for work, for action, not

for sannyasa and Nirvana,—but after years of spiritual effort I had failed to find the way and it was for that I had asked to meet him. His first answer was, "It would be easy for you as you are a poet." But it was not from any point of view like that that N put his question and it was not from that point of view that I gave my answer. It was about some especial character-making virtue that he seemed to attribute to literature.

18-11-1936

(2)

I have not seen what M says, but if it is that you have narrowed or deteriorated because you no longer sing erotic songs, I do not see how that can be. One is not narrowed if one loses taste for Jazz and can hear with rich pleasure only the great masters or music like theirs; it is not deterioration when one rises from a lower to a higher plane of thinking, feeling or artistic self-expression. I used to write poems on vital love, I could not do it now (for if I wrote of love, it would be the psychic and spiritual feeling) not because I have narrowed or deteriorated but I have centred myself in a higher consciousness

and anything merely vital would not express me. It must be the same with anyone who changes his level of consciousness. Can one say of the man who has grown out of childishness and no longer plays with nursery toys that he has narrowed and deteriorated by the change?

27-8-1933

(3)

What you write is perfectly true, that all human greatness and fame and achievement are nothing before the greatness of the Infinite and the Eternal. There are two possible deductions from that: first that all human action has to be renounced and one should go into a cave; the other is that one should grow out of ego so that the activities of the nature may become one day consciously an action of the Infinite and Eternal. I myself never gave up poetry or other creative human activities out of *tapasya*; they fell into a subordinate position because the inner life became stronger and stronger slowly: nor did I really drop them, only I had so heavy a work laid upon me that I could not find time to go on. But it took me years and years to get the ego out

of them or the vital absorption, but I never heard anybody say nor did it ever occur to me that that was a proof that I was not born for Yoga.

(4)

The difficulty you feel or any sadhak feels about sadhana is not really a question of meditation *versus* bhakti *versus* works, it is a difficulty of the attitude to be taken, the approach or whatever you call it. Yours seems to be characterised on one side by a tremendous effort in the mind, on the other a gloomy certitude in the vital which seems to watch and mutter under its breath if not aloud, "Yes, yes go ahead my fine fellow, but"... and at the end of the meditation "What did I tell you?"A vital so ready to despair that even after a "glorious" flood of poetry, it uses the occasion to preach the gospel of despair! I have passed through most of the difficulties of the sadhak, but I cannot recollect to have looked on delight of poetical creation or concentration in it as something undivine and a cause for despair. This seems to me excessive.

23-12-1934

Tagore's Objections to "The Life Heavens"

In regard to Tagore, I understand from P that his objections to *The Life Heavens* were personal rather than in principle—that is, *he himself* had no such experience and could not take them as true (for himself), so they excited in him no emotion, while my poem *Shiva* was just the contrary. I don't say anything to that, as I could not say anything if somebody condemned a poem of mine root-and-branch because he did not like it or on good grounds such as Cousins' objection to the inferiority of the greater part of my poem *In the Moonlight* to the opening stanzas. I learnt a great deal from that objection: it pointed me the way I had to go towards *The Future Poetry*. Not that I did not know before, but that it gave precision and point to my previous perception. But still I don't quite understand Tagore's objection. I myself do not take many things as true in poetry (e.g. Dante's Hell etc.) of which I yet feel the emotion. It is surely part of the power of poetry to open new worlds to us as well as to give a supreme voice to our own ideas, experiences and feelings. *The Life Heavens* may not do that for its readers, but, if so, it is a fault of execution, not of principle.

Publication of "Love and Death"

I am afraid you are under an illusion as to the success of *Love and Death* in England. *Love and Death* dates,—it belongs to the time when Meredith and Phillips were still writing and Yeats and A.E. were only in bud if not in ovo. Since then the wind has changed and even Yeats and A.E. are already a little high and dry on the sands of the past, while the form or other characteristics of *Love and Death* are just the things that are anathema to the post-war writers and literary critics. I fear it would be, if not altogether ignored which is most likely, regarded as a feeble and belated imitation of the literary model exploded and buried long ago. I don't regard it in that light myself, but it is not my opinion that counts for success but that of the modern highbrows. If it had been published when it was written it might have been a success, but now! Of course, I know there are many people still in England, if it got into their hands, who would read it with enthusiasm, but I don't think it would get into their hands at all.

As for the other poems they could not go with *Love and Death*. When the time comes for publication, the sonnets will have to be published in a separate book of sonnets and the others in a sepa-

rate book of (mainly) lyrical poems—so it cannot be now. That at least is my present idea. It is not that I am against publication for all time, but my idea was to wait for the proper time rather than do anything premature.

One thing, however, could be done. P could send his friend *Love and Death* and perhaps the six poems and sound the publishers as to whether the publication, in their eye, would be worthwhile from their point of view. That could at least give a clue.

24-10-1934

*Intellectual Statement of Spiritual
Experience*

I do not think, however, that the statement of supra-intellectual things necessarily involves a making of distinctions in the terms of the intellect. For, fundamentally, it is not an expression of ideas arrived at by speculative thinking. One has to arrive at spiritual knowledge through experience and a consciousness of things which arises directly out of that experience or else underlies or is involved in it. This kind of knowledge, then, is

fundamentally a consciousness and not a thought or formulated idea. For instance, my first major experience—radical and overwhelming, though not, as it turned out, final and exhaustive—came after and by the exclusion and silencing of all thought—there was, first, what might be called a spiritually substantial or concrete consciousness of stillness and silence, then the awareness of some sole and supreme Reality in whose presence things existed only as forms but forms not at all substantial or real or concrete; but this was all apparent to a spiritual perception and essential and impersonal sense and there was not the least concept or idea of reality or unreality or any other notion, for all concept or idea was hushed or rather entirely absent in the absolute stillness. These things were known directly through the pure consciousness and not through the mind, so there was no need of concepts or words or names. At the same time this fundamental character of spiritual experience is not absolutely limitative; it can do without thought, but it can do with thought also. Of course, the first idea of the mind would be that the resort to thought brings one back at once to the domain of the intellect—and at first and for a long time it may be so; but it is not my experience that this is unavoidable. It happens so when one tries to make

an intellectual statement of what one has experienced; but there is another kind of thought that springs out as if it were a body or form of the experience or of the consciousness involved in it—or of a part of that consciousness—and this does not seem to me to be intellectual in its character. It has another light, another power in it, a sense within the sense. It is very clearly so with those thoughts that come without the need of words to embody them, thoughts that are of the nature of a direct seeing in the consciousness, even a kind of intimate sense or contact formulating itself into a precise expression of its awareness (I hope this is not too mystic or unintelligible); but it might be said that directly the thoughts turn into words they belong to the kingdom of intellect—for words are a coinage of the intellect. But is it so really or inevitably? It has always seemed to me that words came originally from somewhere else than the thinking mind, although the thinking mind secured hold of them, turned them to its use and coined them freely for its purposes. But even otherwise, is it not possible to use words for the expression of something that is not intellectual? Housman contends that poetry is perfectly poetical only when it is non-intellectual, when it is nonsense. That is too paradoxical, but I suppose what he means is that if it is put to the

strict test of the intellect, it appears extravagant because it conveys something that expresses and is real to some other kind of seeing than that which intellectual thought brings to us. Is it not possible that words may spring from, that language may be used to express—at least up to a certain point and in a certain way—the supra-intellectual consciousness which is the essential power of spiritual experience? This, however, is by the way—when one tries to explain spiritual experience to the intellect itself, then it is a different matter.

Translation of Prose into Poetry

I think it is quite legitimate to translate poetic prose into poetry; I have done it myself when I translated *The Hero and the Nymph* on the ground that the beauty of Kalidas's prose is best rendered by poetry in English, or, at least, that I found myself best able to render it in that way. Your critic's rule seems to me rather too positive; like all rules it may stand in principle in a majority of cases, but in the minority (which is the best part, for the less is often greater than the more) it need not stand at all. Pushed too far, it would mean that Homer and

Virgil can be translated only in hexameters. Again, what of the reverse cases—the many fine prose translations of poets so much better and more akin to the spirit of the original than any poetic version of them yet made? One need not go farther than Tagore's English version of his *Gitanjali*. If poetry can be translated so admirably (and therefore legitimately) into prose, why should not prose be translated legitimately (and admirably) into poetry? After all, rules are made more for the convenience of critics than as a binding law for creators.

Literalness in Translation

The proper rule about literalness in translation, I suppose, is that one should keep as close as possible to the original provided the result does not read like a translation but like an original poem in Bengali, and, as far as possible, as if it were the original poem originally written in Bengali.

I admit that I have not practised what I preached,—whenever I translated I was careless of the hurt feelings of the original text and transmogrified it without mercy into whatever my fancy chose. But that is a high and mighty criminality which one

ought not to imitate. Latterly I have tried to be more moral in my ways, I don't know with what success. But anyhow it is a case of "Do what I preach and avoid what I practise."

10-10-1934

Quantitative Efforts in English Poetry

N's poem in *laghu-guru* is splendid. But perhaps G would say that it is a pure Bengali rhythm, which means, I suppose, that it reads as well and easily in Bengali as if it were not written on an unusual rhythmic principle. I suppose that must necessarily be the aim of a new metre or metrical principle; it is what I am trying to do with quantitative efforts in English.

Help to New Poets

(1)

Yes, of course, I have been helping J. When somebody wants, really, to develop the literary power,

I put some force to help him or her. If there is faculty and application, however latent the faculty, it always grows under the pressure and can even be turned in this or that direction. Naturally, some are more favourable adharas than others and grow more decisively and quickly. Others drop off not having the necessary power of application. But, on the whole, it is easy enough to make this faculty grow for there is cooperation on the part of the recipient and only the *tamas* of the *apavritti* and *aprakas* in the human mind are to be overcome which are not as serious obstacles in the things of the human mind as a vital resistance or non-cooperation of the will or idea which confronts one when there is a pressure for change or progress in other directions.

11-6-1935

(2)

I don't want to say anything (about her book), because when I cannot positively encourage a young and new writer, I prefer to remain mum.... Each writer must be left to develop in his own way.

31-5-1943

(3)

As to S, you can, if you like, send the complimentary portion of my remarks with perhaps a hint that I found his writing rather unequal, so that it may not be all sugar. But the phrases about album-verse and chaotic technique are too vivid—being meant only for private consumption—to be transmitted to the writer of the poem criticised; I would for that have expressed the same view in less drastic language. As I have already said once, I do not want to write anything disparaging or discouraging for those whom I cannot help to do better. I received much poetry from Indian writers for review in the *Arya*, but I always refrained because I would have had to be very severe. I wrote only about H because there I could seriously, and I think justly, write unqualified praise.

25-5-1931

(4)

R's poems are only attempts—good attempts for his age—so I encourage him by telling him^{er} that they are good attempts. It is his English poems

I correct, as he has talent, but his mastery of the language is still naturally very imperfect. The other three are masters of language and D is a poet of a very high order. I give my general opinion only when they want it. I never make suggestions. It is in English poetry that I give my opinions or correct or make suggestions.

22-II-1933

(5)

I do not know that I can suggest any detailed criticisms of Bengali poetry, as I have to rely more on what I feel than on any expert knowledge of language and metre.

VII

REMINISCENCES AND OBSERVATIONS

The 15th of August, 1947

August 15th, 1947 is the birthday of free India. It marks for her the end of an old era, the beginning of a new age. But we can also make it by our life and acts as a free nation an important date in a new age opening for the whole world, for the political, social, cultural and spiritual future of humanity.

August 15th is my own birthday and it is naturally gratifying to me that it should have assumed this vast significance. I take this coincidence, not as a fortuitous accident, but as the sanction and seal of the Divine Force that guides my steps on the work with which I began life, the beginning of its full fruition. Indeed, on this day I can watch almost all the world-movements which I hoped to see fulfilled in my lifetime, though then they looked like impracticable dreams, arriving at fruition or on their way to achievement. In all these movements free

India may well play a large part and take a leading position.

The first of these dreams was a revolutionary movement which would create a free and united India. India today is free but she has not achieved unity. At one moment it almost seemed as if in the very act of liberation she would fall back into the chaos of separate States which preceded the British conquest. But fortunately it now seems probable that this danger will be averted and a large and powerful, though not yet a complete union will be established. Also, the wisely drastic policy of the Constituent Assembly has made it probable that the problem of the depressed classes will be solved without schism or fissure. But the old communal division into Hindus and Muslims seems now to have hardened into a permanent political division of the country. It is to be hoped that this settled fact will not be accepted as settled for ever or as anything more than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts, India may be seriously weakened, even crippled: civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. India's internal development and prosperity may be impeded, her position among the nations weakened, her destiny impaired or even frustrated. This must not be; the partition must go. Let us hope

that that may come about naturally, by an increasing recognition of the necessity not only of peace and concord but of common action, by the practice of common action and the creation of means for that purpose. In this way unity may finally come about under whatever form—the exact form may have, a pragmatic but not a fundamental importance. But by whatever means, in whatever way, the division must go; unity must and will be achieved, for it is necessary for the greatness of India's future.

Another dream was for the resurgence and liberation of the peoples of Asia and her return to her great role in the progress of human civilisation. Asia has arisen; large parts are now quite free or are at this moment being liberated: its other still subject or partly subject parts are moving through whatever struggles towards freedom. Only a little has to be done and that will be done today or tomorrow. There India has her part to play and has begun to play it with an energy and ability which already indicate the measure of her possibilities and the place she can take in the council of the nations.

The third dream was a world-union forming the outer basis of a fairer, brighter and nobler life for all mankind. That unification of the human world is under way; there is an imperfect initiation organised but struggling against tremendous difficulties.

But the momentum is there and it must inevitably increase and conquer. Here, too, India has begun to play a prominent part and, if she can develop that larger statesmanship which is not limited by the present facts and immediate possibilities but looks into the future and brings it nearer, her presence may make all the difference between a slow and timid and a bold and swift development. A catastrophe may intervene and interrupt or destroy what is being done, but even then the final result is sure. For unification is a necessity of Nature, an inevitable movement. Its necessity for the nations is also clear, for without it the freedom of the small nations may be at any moment in peril and the life even of the large and powerful nations insecure. The unification is therefore to the interests of all, and only human imbecility and stupid selfishness can prevent it; but these cannot stand for ever against the necessity of Nature and the Divine Will. But an outward basis is not enough; there must grow up an international spirit and outlook, international forms and institutions must appear, perhaps such developments as dual or multilateral citizenship, willed interchange or voluntary fusion of cultures. Nationalism will have fulfilled itself and lost its militancy and would no longer find these things incompatible with self-preservation and the integrality

of its outlook. A new spirit of oneness will take hold of the human race.

Another dream, the spiritual gift of India to the world has already begun. India's spirituality is entering Europe and America in an ever increasing measure. That movement will grow; amid the disasters of the time more and more eyes are turning towards her with hope and there is even an increasing resort not only to her teachings, but to her psychic and spiritual practice.

The final dream was a step in evolution which would raise man to a higher and larger consciousness and begin the solution of the problems which have perplexed and vexed him since he first began to think and to dream of individual perfection and a perfect society. This is still a personal hope and an idea, an ideal which has begun to take hold both in India and in the West on forward-looking minds. The difficulties in the way are more formidable than in any other field of endeavour, but difficulties were made to be overcome and if the Supreme Will is there, they will be overcome. Here, too, if this evolution is to take place, since it must proceed through a growth of the spirit and the inner consciousness, the initiative can come from India and, although the scope must be universal, the central movement may be hers.

Such is the content which I put into this date of India's liberation; whether or how far this hope will be justified depends upon the new and free India.

Reason for Leaving Politics

I MAY also say that I did not leave politics because I felt I could do nothing more there; such an idea was very far from me. I came away because I did not want anything to interfere with my Yoga and because I got a very distinct *adesh* in the matter. I have cut connection entirely with politics, but before I did so I knew from within that the work I had begun there was destined to be carried forward, on lines I had foreseen, by others, and that the ultimate triumph of the movement I had initiated was sure without my personal action or presence. There was not the least motive of despair or sense of futility behind my withdrawal. For the rest, I have never known any will of mine for one major event in the conduct of the world affairs to fail in the end, although it may take a long time for the world-forces to fulfil it. As for the possibility of failure in my spiritual work, I shall deal with that another time. Difficulties

there are, but I see no cause for pessimism or for the certification of failure.

October, 1932

"The Most Dangerous Man in India"

The Divine may be difficult, but His difficulties can be overcome if one keeps at Him. Even my smilelessness was overcome which Nevinson had remarked with horrors more than twenty years before — "the most dangerous man in India", Aurobindo Ghosh who "never smiles". He ought to have added: "but who always jokes" — but he did not know that, as I was very solemn with him, or perhaps I had not developed sufficiently on that side then. Anyhow, if you could overcome *that* — my smilelessness — you are bound to overcome all the other difficulties also.

II-2-1937

Taste of Mahratta Cookery

I hope your dinner at Dewas did not turn out like

my first taste of Mahratta cookery—when for some reason my dinner was *non est* and somebody went to my neighbour, a Mahratta Professor, for food. I took one mouthful and only one. O God! Sudden fire in the mouth could not have been more surprising. Enough to bring down the whole of London in one wild agonising swoop of flame!

Pain and Physical Ananda

As for Divine rapture, a knock on head or foot or elsewhere can be received with the physical ananda of pain or pain and Ananda or pure physical Ananda—for I have often, quite involuntarily, made the experiment myself and passed with honours. It began by the way as far back as in Alipore Jail when I got bitten in my cell by some very red and ferocious-looking warrior ants and found to my surprise that pain and pleasure are conventions of our senses. But I do not expect that unusual reaction from others. And I suppose there are limits.

13-2-1932

Sister Nivedita and Sister Christine

I knew very well Sister Nivedita (she was for many years a friend and a comrade in the political field) and met Sister Christine,—the two closest European disciples of Vivekananda. Both were Westerners to the core and had nothing at all of the Hindu outlook; although Sister Nivedita, an Irish woman, had the power of penetrating by an intense sympathy into the ways of life of the people around her, her own nature remained non-oriental to the end. Yet she found no difficulty in arriving at realisation on the lines of Vedanta.

Gurugiri

K's objection to Grace would be valid if the religionists mattered, but in spiritual things they don't. Their action naturally is to make a formula and dry shell of everything, not Grace alone. Even "Awake, Arise, Arise" leads to the swelled head or the formula—can't be avoided when Mr. Everyman deals with things divine. I had the same kind of violent objection to Gurugiri, but you see I was obliged by the irony of things or rather by the

inexorable truth behind them to become a Guru and preach the Guruvada. Such is Fate.

16-1-1936

Shiva Temperament

I have no special liking for the ideal of Shiva, though something of the Shiva temperament must necessarily be present. I never had any turn for rejection of the money power nor any attachment to it. One has to rise above these things; but it is precisely when one has risen above that one can more easily command them.

15-1-1936

True Asceticism

It depends on what is meant by asceticism. I have no desires but I don't lead outwardly an ascetic life, only a secluded one. According to the Gita, *tyaga* the inner freedom from desire and attachment, is the true asceticism.

9-7-1937

Society Manners and Spiritual Life

But when on earth were politeness and good society manners considered as a part or a test of spiritual experience or true Yogic siddhi? It is no more a test than the capacity of dancing well or dressing nicely. Just as there are very good and kind men who are boorish and rude in their manners, so there may be very spiritual men (I mean here by spiritual men those who have had deep spiritual experiences) who have no grasp over physical life of action (many intellectuals too, by the way, are like that) and are not at all careful about their manners. I suppose I myself am accused for rude and arrogant behaviour because I refuse to see people, do not answer letters, and a host of other misdeemeanours. I have heard of a famous recluse who threw stones at anybody coming to his retreat because he did not want disciples and found no other way of warding off the flood of candidates. I, at least, would hesitate to pronounce that such people had no spiritual life or experience. Certainly, I prefer that sadhaks should be reasonably considerate towards each other, but that is for the rule of collective life and harmony, not as a siddhi of the Yoga or an indispensable sign of inner experience.

December, 1935

Yogic Peace and Sattwic Temperament

Q: People of 'sattwic' temperament in ordinary life behave practically in the same manner as the sadhaks who realise spiritual peace as a result of Yoga. Can it be said that in the 'sattwic' people the peace descends but in a hidden manner, or is it due to their past lives that they have the 'sattwic' temperament?

*A: Of course they have gained their power to live in the mind by a past evolution. But the spiritual peace is something other and infinitely more than the mental peace, and its results are different, not merely clear thinking or some control or balance or a *sattwic* state. But its greater results can only be fully and permanently manifest when it lasts long enough in the system or when one feels spread out in it above the head and on every side stretching towards infinity as well as penetrated by it down to the very cells. Then it carries with it the deep and vast and solid tranquillity that nothing can shake—even if on the surface there is storm and battle. I was myself of the *sattwic* type you describe in my youth, but when the peace from above came down, that was quite different. *Sattwaguna* disappeared into *nirguna* and negative *nirguna* into positive *traigunyatita*.*

22-7-1935

Capacity and Liking for Work

It is not a question of liking but of capacity—though usually (not always) liking goes with the capacity. But capacity can be developed and liking can be developed or rather the *rasa* you speak of. One cannot be said to be in the full yogic condition—for the purpose of this Yoga—if one cannot take up with willingness any work given to one as an offering to the Divine. At one time I was absolutely unfit for any physical work and cared only for the mental, but I trained myself in doing physical things with care and perfection so as to overcome this glaring defect in my being and make the bodily instrument apt and conscious. It was the same with some others here. A nature not trained to accept external work and activity becomes mentally too top-heavy—physically inert and obscure. It is only if one is disabled or physically too weak that physical work can be put aside altogether. I am speaking of course from the point of view of the ideal—the rest depends upon the nature.

As for the deity presiding over the control of servants, godown work as well as over poetry and painting, it is always the same—the Shakti, the Mother.

12-12-1934

21

Genius for Lolling

As for your pious desire to loll a little now after your bout of stupendous work, well, there is no *how* about it: one just lolls if one has the genius for it. I have, though opportunities are now lacking for showing my genius. But it can't be taught nor any process invented: it is just a gift of Nature.

Seeing Unknown People by Inner Vision

Yes, of course, I remember about B—I can't say I remember him because I never saw him, at least in the flesh. What he probably means by the supramental is the Above Mind—what I now call Illumined Mind—Intuition—Overmind. I used to make that confusion myself at the beginning.

There is not much to go upon to say whether he really sees the Mother or an image of her as reflected in his own mind. But there is nothing extraordinary, much less improbable, in seeing a person whom one has never seen—you are thinking as if the inner mind and sense, the inner vision, were limited by the outer mind and sense, the outer vision, or were mere reflection of that. There would be not much use in

an inner mind and sense and vision if they were only that and nothing more. This faculty is one of the elementary powers of the inner sense and inner seeing, and not only Yogins have it, but the ordinary clairvoyants, crystal-gazers, etc. The latter can see people they never saw or heard of before, doing certain precise things in certain very precise surroundings, and every detail of the vision is confirmed afterwards by the persons seen—there are many striking and indubitable cases of that kind. The Mother is always seeing people whom she does not know, some afterwards come here or their photographs come here. I myself have had these visions, only I don't usually try to remember or verify them. But there were two curious instances which were among the first of this kind and which therefore I remember. Once I was trying to see a recently elected deputy here and saw someone quite different from him, someone who afterwards came here as Governor. I ought never to have met him in the ordinary course, but a curious mistake happened and as a result I went and saw him in his bureau and at once recognised him. The other was a certain V. R. whom I had to meet, but I saw him not as he was when he actually came, but as he became after a year's residence in my house. He became the very image of that vision, a face close-crop-

ped, rough, rude, energetic, the very opposite of the smooth-faced enthusiastic Vaishnava who came to me. So that was the vision of a man I had never seen, but as he was to be in the future—prophetic vision.

24-10-1934

The Swaying Sensation

Q: I was standing on the scaffolding (on the wall) which was swinging to and fro. Once I saw the walls nearby swinging like a pendulum. I understood the reason, but the sight of swinging walls was so vivid that I put my hands on the wall nearby to be convinced that it was not moving—yet the “eye-mind” refused to accept the evidence of the “touch-mind”!

A: But what was it due to? The sense of swinging of the scaffolding communicating itself to the walls as it were in the impression upon some brain-centre? After travelling long in a boat I had once or twice the swaying sense of it after coming off it, as if the land about me was tossing like the boat—of course a subtle physical impression, but vivid enough.

4-4-1935

Thinking from Outside the Body

Q: Owing to much reading I feel a strain and dryness in the head and find it difficult to sleep. But while reading and remembering I feel as if the process goes on somewhere in the chest and not in the head and yet the strain is felt in the head. Why is this so?

A: The chest action is rather curious, because it is the vital mind that is there and the Romans always spoke of the mind as if it were in the heart. But memory and reading would rather be in the physical mind. But anyhow the brain is a conveying instrument for all these activities and can feel the strain if there is any. The best relief for the brain is when the thinking takes place outside the body and above the head (or in space or at other levels but still outside the body). At any rate it was so in my case; for as soon as that happened there was an immense relief; I have felt body strain since then but never any kind of brain-fatigue. I have heard the same thing from others.

19-12-1934

A Hint

Q: I concentrate so much on reading that no room

is left for sadhana-thinking with the result that as soon as I come out of that concentration anything can enter in my mind. Is this not an undesirable practice from the point of view of discipline in sadhana?

A: I should say that if you could divide your attention between the reading and sadhana-thought and concentration more, it might be better from the point of view you mention. I mean that there should be sufficient concentration to create in your mind a sadhana-atmosphere which you can bring up to the surface as soon as you leave reading or whenever it is needed to set right an invading movement. Otherwise the subconscious forces have free play and gain power. Besides the condition becomes subconscious, i.e. inert and like a drift. At least that is what I have seen recently in my dealings with my own subconscious, so I pass on the hint to you.

27-5-1935

Subconscious Dreams

(I)

Q: I do not find any change in the character of my dreams as yet—I get the usual kind of dreams about

home-life, eating, meeting strange people, moving about, etc. Why has there been no change in this respect in spite of my three years of sadhana here?

A: Dreams of this kind can last for years and years after the waking consciousness has ceased to interest itself in things of that kind. The subconscious is exceedingly obstinate in the keeping of its old impressions. I find myself even recently having a dream of revolutionary activities or another in which the Maharaja of Baroda butted in, people and things I have not even thought of passingly for the last twenty years almost. I suppose it is because the very business of the subconscious in the human psychology is to keep all the past inside it and, being without conscious mentality, it clings to its office until the light has fully come down into it, illumining even its corners and crevices.

17-12-1934

(2)

Q: For the last few days I am having frequent dreams of eating. Does it indicate greed for food or a need in the body or is it a sign of coming illness as they believe in the villages?

A: I don't think so—it is probably old impressions from the subconscious material (not vital—therefore a memory rather than desire) rising up in sleep. I remember a time when I was always seeing dishes of food even though I did not care a hang about food at that time.

2-4-1934

Different Personalities

Q: I am still not able to maintain the right attitude in my own sadhana and yet I give advice to others in their difficulties. Is this not hypocrisy and insincerity?

A: Well, one can give good advice even when one does not follow it oneself—there is the old adage “Do what I preach and not what I practise”. More seriously, there are different personalities in oneself and the one that is eager to advise and help may be quite sincere. I remember in days long past when I still had personal struggles and difficulties, people came to me from outside for advice etc. when I was in a black depression and could not see my way

out of a sense of hopelessness and failure, yet nothing of that came out and I spoke with an assured conviction. Was that insincerity? I think not,—the one who spoke in me was quite sure of what he spoke. The turning of all oneself to the Divine is not an easy matter and one must not be discouraged if it takes time and other movements still intervene. One must note, rectify and go on—*anirvinnena chetasa*.

24-2-1935

Human Responsibility

My experience shows me that human beings are much less deliberate and responsible for their acts than the moralists, novelists and dramatists make them, and I look rather to see what forces drove them than what the man himself may have seemed by inference to have intended or purposed—our inferences are often wrong and even when they are right touch only the surface of the matter.

22-6-1934

Horoscopes and Astrology

(1)

I can't say anything about the horoscope, as I have forgotten the little astrology I knew.

14-9-1936

(2)

Astrologers tell all sorts of things that don't come true. According to one I was to have died last year, according to another I was to have gone out from Pondicherry in March or May last year and wandered about India with my disciples till I disappeared in a river (in a ferry). Even if the prediction were accurate according to the horoscope it need not fulfil itself, because by entering the spiritual life one opens to a new force which can change one's destiny.

22-8-1937

(3)

Q: S told me that today (April 4, 1936) is the birth-

day of Pondicherry because you came here on this date. If one can place oneself in the year 2036 A.D. he may find that 4th April is celebrated as the birthday of the earth's spiritual life. Perhaps the horoscope of the earth may show this more accurately; but is there a horoscope of the earth as there are horoscopes of some villages?

A: Pondicherry was born long ago—but if S means the rebirth, it may be, for it was absolutely dead when I came. I don't know that there is a horoscope of the Earth. There was nobody present to note the year, day, hour, minute when she came into existence. But some astrologer could take the position of the stars at the moment when I got out of the boat and build up the terrestrial consequences upon that perhaps! Unfortunately he would probably get everything wrong, like the astrologer who predicted that I would leave Pondicherry in March 1936 and wander about India till 1948 and then disappear while bathing in a river among my disciples. I believe he predicted it on the strength of Bhrigu Samhita—the old dodge; but I am not sure. Long ago I had a splendiferous Mussolinic-Napoleonic prediction of my future made to me on the strength of the same old mythological Bhrigu.

4-5-1936

Record in Book-Production

Q: A told me that X has translated a novel in English half of which is corrected by you; this practically means that X makes you translate somebody's novel instead of himself translating "Arya" which would be more reasonable. What ordeals for you to pass through! Perhaps the person who remarked in a London paper that you had written five hundred books was not quite wrong; by this time your letters to sadhaks would make three or four books for each of them and if to these are added your poems, translations and other writings the total would not be less than five hundred.

A: The idea of X translating Arya makes the hair stand on end! It would be much easier for me to write five hundred books. Perhaps I have done so—if all I have scribbled is to be taken into account against me. But most of it will not see the light of day—at least of public day; I may still escape establishing the record in book-production.

3-2-1935

"Arya"

Q: It is said that "Arya" began on the day the

World War broke out or just before it. Has this not some significance? Was it not a kind of parallel movement?

A: The *Arya* was decided on the 1st June (1914) and it was agreed that it would start on the 15th August. The war intervened on the 4th. "Parallelism" of dates if you like, but it was not very close and certainly nothing came down at that time.

9-9-1935

(2)

The *Arya* was, in fact, a financial success. It paid its way with a large surplus.

(3)

The word "global" also has established itself and it is too useful and indeed indispensable to reject; there is no other word that can express exactly the same shade of meaning. I heard it first from Arjava who described the language of *Arya* as expressing a global thinking and I at once caught

it up as the right and only word for certain things, for instance, the thinking in masses which is a frequent characteristic of the Overmind.

3-4-1947

"The Mother"

The Mother had not the same origin as the other books mentioned (*Lights on Yoga, Bases of Yoga, The Riddle of this World*). The main part of this book describing the four Shaktis, etc., was written independently and not as a letter, so also the first part.

"The Synthesis of Yoga"

(I)

The Synthesis of Yoga was not meant to be a method for all to follow. Each side of the Yoga was dealt with separately with all its possibilities and indications as to how they meet so that one starting from knowledge could realise Karma and bhakti also and so with each path. It was intended

when the "Self-Perfection" was finished to suggest a way in which all could be combined, but this was never written. *The Mother* and the *Lights* were not intended to be a systematic treatment of the sadhana as a whole; they only touch on various elements in it.

18-5-1936

(2)

At the time when the last chapters of *The Synthesis of Yoga* were written in the *Arya*, the name "overmind" had not been found, so there is no mention of it. What is described in those chapters is the action of the Supermind when it descends into the overmind plane and takes up the overmind workings and transforms them. The highest Supermind or Divine gnosis existent in itself, is something that lies beyond still and quite above. It was intended in latter chapters to show how difficult even this was and how many levels there were between the human mind and Supermind and how even Supermind descending could get mixed with the lower action and turned into something that was less than the true Truth. But these latter chapters were not written.

13-4-1932

(3)

Q: What about the publication of the "Synthesis"? They are all asking me about it. So many are eager that it should see the light, fed up as we all are with analysis of the universe through science of mind and ignorance of life, what?

A: I hope you are not referring to the whole colossal mass of the Synthesis of Yoga,—though that too may be ready for publication before the next world-war(?) or after the beginning of the Satya-yuga (New World Order?). If you mean the "Yoga of Works", I am writing or trying to write four or five additional chapters for it. I hope they will be ready in a reasonable time; but my daily time is short and chapters are long. In the absence of exact prophetic power, that is all I can say.

2-3-1944

"Essays on the Gita"

Q: I had read your "Essays on the Gita" thrice before, still when I started reading it again recently I found that there were so many ideas in it which I had

missed before. I think if I read it over and over again I would find newer and newer ideas every time.

A: That is a common experience—most books with any profundity of knowledge in them have that effect. Almost all spiritual problems have been briefly but deeply dealt with in the *Gita* and I have tried to bring out all that fully in the *Essays*.

1-11-1936

“The Future Poetry”

It was not the intention to make a long review of Cousins' book in *The Future Poetry*, that was only a starting-point; the rest was drawn from Sri Aurobindo's own ideas and his already conceived view of Art and life.

“Yogic Sadhan”

(1)

Your friend writes about my disapproval of Vairagya in *Yogic Sadhan*. But *Yogic Sadhan* is *not* my composition, nor its contents the essence of my

Yoga, whatever the publishers may persist in saying in their lying blurb, inspite of protests.

4-5-1934

(2)

The Yogi from the North (Uttara Yogi) was my own name given to me because of a prediction made long ago by a famous Tamil Yogi, that thirty years later (agreeing with the time of my arrival) a Yogi from the North would come as a fugitive to the South and practise there an integral Yoga (Poorna Yoga), and this would be one sign of the approaching liberty of India. He gave three utterances as the mark by which this Yogi could be recognised and all these were found in the letters to my wife.

As for *Yogic Sadhan* it was not I exactly who wrote it, though it is true that I am not a Mayavadin.

"Sri Aurobindo Prasange"

It is not about Baroda nor my own writing—it is

some conversations, I do not know how far correctly reported, by a young man who came from Chander-nagore here for a short time. I don't know if it is of any value. It belongs to the long ago and things have changed much since then.

25-1-1935

A. G.

I do not use the initials A.G.—They have been discarded long ago.

14-9-1933

Aristotle's Dry Philosophy

Q: I tried to read Aristotle but found him very dry and abstract.

A: I always found him exceedingly dry. It is a purely mental philosophy, not like Plato's.

Object of Special Issues¹

The object of such special issues is not to exhibit me to the public and show them all ends of me, i.e., to make me go through all my possible performances on a public stage. The object is to make the reading public better acquainted with the nature of this Yoga and the principle of what is being done in the Ashram. The private matters of the Ashram itself are *not* for the public—at most only so much as the public can see. *A fortiori* anything personal and private about me is also taboo. I come in only so far as it is necessary for the public to know my thought and what I stand for. You will notice that my life itself is so written as to give only the grey precise surface facts, nothing more. All propensity to make me figure in the big Barnum circus of journalistic “features” along with or in competition with Joe Zones the prize-fighter, Douglas Fairbanks, H. G. Wells, King George and Queen Mary, Haile Selassie, Hobbs, Hitler, Jack the Ripper (or any modern substitute of his) and Mussolini should be strictly banished from the mentality for evermore and the day after.

24-9-1935

¹ Special Issues on Sri Aurobindo of some daily or weekly periodicals.

Secrecy in Spiritual Matters

Q: Would it not sometimes be dangerous to speak truth, e.g., in politics, war, revolution? The truth-speaking moralist who would always insist on not concealing anything may bring disaster by revealing the plans and movements of one side to the opposite side.

A: Politics, war, revolution are things of stratagem and ambush—one cannot expect the truth there. D told me it was impossible to lead men in politics or get one's objects without telling falsehoods by the yard and he was often feeling utterly disgusted with himself and his work, but supposed he would have to go through with it to the end.

There is no necessity to reveal one's plans and movements to those who have no business to know it, who are incapable of understanding or who would act as enemies or spoil all as a result of their knowledge. Secrecy is perfectly admissible and usual in spiritual matters except in special relations like that of the Shishya to the Guru. We do not let people outside know what is going on in the Ashram but we do not tell any lies about it either. Most Yogis say nothing about their spiritual experiences to others or not until long afterwards and secrecy was a general rule among the ancient mystics. No moral or spiritual law commands us to make ourselves naked to the

world or open up our hearts and minds for public inspection. Gandhi talked about secrecy being a sin but that is one of his many extravagances.

17-5-1936

(2)

It is not very advisable to discuss either myself or the Ashram or spiritual things with hostile minds or unbelievers. These discussions usually bring on the sadhak a stress of the opposing atmosphere and cannot be helpful to his progress. Reserve is the best attitude; one need not be concerned to dispel their bad will or their ignorance.

13-9-1932

Misunderstanding of Sri Aurobindo's Writing

(1)

People do not understand what I write because the mind by itself cannot understand things that are

beyond it. It constructs its own idea out of something that it catches or that it has caught and puts that idea as the whole meaning of what has been written. Each mind puts its own ideas in place of the Truth.

6-6-1936

(2)

People often catch hold of something written by me or said by the Mother, give it an interpretation quite other than or far beyond its true meaning and deduce from it a suddenly extreme and *logical* conclusion which is quite contrary to our knowledge and experience. It is natural, I suppose, and part of the game of the hostile forces; it is so much easier to come to vehement logical conclusions than to look at the Truth which is many-sided and whole.

May, 1933

(3)

I do not believe in human judgments because I have always found them fallible—also perhaps be-

cause I have myself been so blackened by human judgments that I do not care to be guided by them with regard to others. All this, however, I write to explain my own point of view; I am not insisting on it as a law for others. I have never been in the habit of insisting that everybody must think as I do—any more than I insist on everybody following me and my Yoga.

December, 1934

(4)

If I write about these questions from the yogic point of view, even though on a logical basis, there is bound to be much that is in conflict with the current opinions, e.g., about miracles, the limits of judgment by sense-data, etc. I have avoided as much as possible writing about these subjects because I would have to propound things that cannot be understood except by reference to other data than those of the physical senses or of reason founded on these alone. I might have to speak of laws and forces not recognised by reason or physical science. In my public writings and my writings to sadhaks I have not dealt with these because they

go out of the range of ordinary knowledge and the understanding founded on it. These things are known to some, but they do not usually speak about them, while the public view of much of those as are known is either credulous or incredulous, but in both cases without experience or knowledge.

December, 1935

Materialistic Science and Mysticism

I am afraid I have lost all interest in these speculations; things are getting too serious for me to waste time on these inconclusive intellectualities. I do not at all mind your driving your point triumphantly home and replacing a dogmatism from materialistic science on its throne of half a century ago from which it could victoriously ban all thought surpassing its own narrow bounds as mere wordy metaphysics and mysticism and moonshine. Obviously, if material energies alone can exist in the material world, there can be no possibility of a life divine on the earth. A mere metaphysical "sleight of mind", as one might call it, could not justify it against the objections of scientific negation

and concrete common sense. I had thought that even many scientific minds on the Continent had come to admit that science could no longer claim to decide what was the real reality of things, that it had no means of deciding it and could only discover and describe the how and process of the operations of material Force in the physical front of things. That left the field open to higher thought and speculation, spiritual experience and even to mysticism, occultism and all those greater things which almost everyone had come to disbelieve as impossible nonsense. That was the condition of things when I was in England. If that is to return or if Russia and her dialectical materialism are to lead the world, well, fate must be obeyed and life divine must remain content to wait perhaps for another millennium. But I do not like the idea of one of our periodicals being the arena for a wrestle of that kind. That is all. I am writing under the impression of your earlier article on this subject, as I have not gone carefully through the later ones; I dare say these later ones may be entirely convincing and I would find after reading them that my own position was wrong and that only an obstinate mystic could still believe in such a conquest of Matter by the Spirit as I had dared to think possible. But I am just such an obstinate mystic; so, if I

allowed your exposition of the matter to be published in one of our own periodicals, I would be under the obligation of returning to the subject in which I have lost interest and therefore the inclination to write, so as to re-establish my position and would have to combat the claim of materialistic Science to pronounce anything on these matters on which it has no means of enquiry nor any possibility of arriving at a valid decision. Perhaps I would have practically to rewrite *The Life Divine* as an answer to the victorious "negation of the materialist"! This is the only explanation which I can give, apart from sheer want of time to tackle the subject, for my long and disappointing silence.

May, 1949

.

Writing philosophy—Fame and Propaganda

(I)

Look here! Do these people expect me to turn myself again into a machine for producing articles? The times of the *Bande Mataram* and *Arya* are over, thank God! I have now only the Ashram correspondence and that is "overwhelming" enough in all conscience without starting philosophy for standard books and the rest of it.

And philosophy! Let me tell you in confidence that I never, never, never was a philosopher—although I have written philosophy which is another story altogether. I knew precious little about philosophy before I did the Yoga and came to Pondicherry—I was a poet and a politician, not a philosopher. How I managed to do it and why? First, because X proposed to me to cooperate in a philosophical review—and as my theory was that a Yogi ought to be able to turn his hand to anything, I could not very well refuse; and then he had to go to the war and left me in the lurch with sixty-four pages a month of philosophy all to write by my lonely self. Secondly, because I had only to write down in the terms of the intellect all that I had observed and come to know in practising Yoga daily and the philosophy was there automatically. But that is not being a philosopher!

I don't know how to excuse myself to R—for I can't say all that to him. Perhaps you can find a formula for me? Perhaps: "so occupied, not a moment for any other work, can't undertake because he might not be able to carry out his promise". What do you say?

4-9-1934

(2)

As to R, I don't care whether he is right or wrong in his eagerness to get the blessed contribution from me. But the first fact is that it is quite impossible for me to write philosophy to order. If something comes to me of itself, I can write, if I have time. But I have no time. I had some thought of writing to A pointing out that he was mistaken in his criticism of my ideas about consciousness and intuition and developing briefly what were my real views about these things. But I have never been able to do it. I might as well think of putting the moon under my arm—Hanuman-like—although in his case it was the sun—and going for a walk. The moon is not available and the walk is not possible. It would be the same if I promised anything to R—it would not get done, and that would be much worse than a refusal.

And the second fact is that I do not care a button about having my name in any blessed place. I was never ardent about fame even in my political days: I preferred to remain behind the curtain, push people without their knowing it and get things done. It was the confounded British Government that spoiled my game by prosecuting me and forcing me to be publicly known and a "leader". Then, again, I don't

believe in advertisement except for books etc., and in propaganda except for politics and patent medicines. But for serious work it is a poison. It means either a stunt or a boom and stunts and booms exhaust the thing they carry on their crest and leave it lifeless and broken high and dry on the shores of nowhere—or it means a movement. A movement in the case of a work like mine means the founding of a school or a sect or some other damned nonsense. It means that hundreds or thousands of useless people join in and corrupt the work or reduce it to a pompous farce from which the Truth that was coming down recedes into secrecy and silence. It is what has happened to the “religions” and is the reason of their failure. If I tolerate a little writing about myself, it is only to have a sufficient counterweight in that amorphous chaos, the public mind, to balance the hostility that is always aroused by the presence of a new dynamic Truth in this world of ignorance. But the utility ends there and too much advertisement would defeat that object. I am perfectly “rational”, I assure you, in my methods and I do not proceed merely on any personal dislike of fame. If and so far as publicity serves the Truth, I am quite ready to tolerate it; but I do not find publicity for its own sake desirable.

This “Contemporary Philosophy”, British or

Indian, looks to me very much like book-making and (though the "vulgarisation" of knowledge—to use the French term—by book-making may have its use) I prefer to do solid work and leave that to others. You may say that I can write a solid thing in philosophy and let it be book-made. But even the solid tends to look shoddy in such surroundings. And, besides, my solid work at present is not philosophy but something less wordy and more to the point. If that work gets done, then it will propagate itself so far as propagation is necessary—if it were not to get done, propagation would be useless.

These are my reasons. However, let us wait till the book is there and see what kind of stuff it is.

2-10-1934

To a Biographer

(1)

I see that you have persisted in giving a biography—is it really necessary or useful? The attempt is bound to be a failure, because neither you nor anyone else knows anything at all of my life; it has not been on the surface for men to see.

You have given a sort of account of my political action, but the impression it makes on me and would make, I believe, on your public is that of a fiery idealist rushing furiously at an impossible aim (knocking his head against a stone wall, which is not a very sensible proceeding) without any grasp of realities and without any intelligible political method or plan of action. The practical people of the West would hardly be well impressed by such a picture and it would make them suspect that, probably, my Yoga was a thing of the same type!

(2)

But why write my biography at all? Is it really necessary? In my view, a man's value does not depend on what he learns, or his position or fame, or what he does, but on what he is and inwardly becomes.*

Part Two

*Sri Aurobindo On Himself
and
On The Mother*

.



I
LEADERS OF EVOLUTION

Secret Helpers of Evolution

(1)

*Q: It is said that you and the Mother were on this earth since the creation started. Kindly enlighten me what you both were doing for so many millions of years remaining in disguise. I say 'disguise' because it is only in this birth that you have shown to the world your real nature. **

A: Carrying on the evolution.

25-5-1935

(2)

Q: Please explain this point a little more in detail.

A: That would mean writing the whole of human history. I can only say that as there are special

descents to carry on the evolution to a farther stage, so also something of the Divine is always there to help through each stage itself in one direction or another.

26-5-1935

The Mystery of Incarnation

Q: The Mother has written: "In our daily practices we are endeavouring to express the great mystery of Divine Incarnation." What does it mean?

A: It means that we act as we do because we take it as a fact that the Divine can manifest and is manifested in human body.

Manifestation of the Personal Divine

It is rather surprising that you should be unable to understand such a simple and familiar statement; for that has been always the whole reason of this Yoga that to follow after the Impersonal only brings inner experience or, at the most, *mukti*. Without the action of the integral Divine there is no change of the whole nature. If it were not so,

the Mother would not be here and I would not be here if a realisation of the Impersonal were sufficient.

15-9-1936

Self-veiling of the Divine to Meet the Human

Q: It seems to me that if the Supermind is not established in Mother's body-consciousness, it is not because she is not ready for it like us, but because in order to establish it she has first to prepare the physical of the sadhaks and of the earth to a certain extent. But some people take it in the wrong way; they believe that the Supermind has not been established in her body because she has not yet reached perfection. Am I right?

A: Certainly. If we had lived physically in the Supermind from the beginning nobody could have been able to approach us nor could any sadhana have been done. There could have been no hope of contact between ourselves and the earth and men. Even as it is, Mother has to come down towards the lower consciousness of the sadhaks instead of keeping always in her own, otherwise they begin to say, "How far away, how severe you were; you do not love me, I get no help from you, etc., etc."

The Divine has to veil himself in order to meet the human.

Preparing the Manifestation

Yes, of course. What is being done is meant to prepare the manifestation of the Supermind on the earth consciousness down to Matter itself, so it can't be for the physical of myself or the Mother alone.

If it (the Supermind) comes down into our physical it would mean that it has come down into Matter and so there is no reason why it should not manifest in the sadhaks.

15-9-1935

Work through Ages

(1)

Q: In her book "Conversations" the Mother says: "We have all met in previous lives...and have worked through ages for the victory of the Divine." Is this true of all people who come and stay here? What about so many who came and went away?

A: Those who went away were also of these and still are of that circle. Temporary checks do not make any difference in the essential truth of the soul's seeking.

18-6-1933

(2)

Q: In what way have we all "worked through ages for the victory of the Divine"? How much has been achieved till now?

A: By the victory is meant the final emergence of the embodied consciousness on earth from the bondage of the Ignorance. That had to be prepared through the ages by a spiritual evolution. Naturally, the work up till now has been a preparation of which the long spiritual effort and experience of the past has been the outcome. It has reached a point at which the decisive effort has become possible.

18-6-1933

Significance of the Blue Flag

About the blue flag. I presume you mean the flag with the white lotus. If so, it is the Mother's

flag, for the white lotus is her symbol as the red lotus is mine. The blue of the flag is meant to be the colour of Krishna and so represents the spiritual or divine consciousness which it is her work to establish so that it may reign upon earth. This is the meaning of the flag being used as the Ashram flag, that our work is to bring down this consciousness and make it the leader of the world's life.

14-3-1949

II

IDENTITY OF THEIR CONSCIOUSNESS

Identity of Consciousness and Path

(I)

The opposition between the Mother's consciousness and my consciousness was an invention of the old days (due mainly to X, Y and others of that time) and emerged in a time when the Mother was not fully recognised or accepted by some of those who were here at the beginning. Even after they had recognised her they persisted in this meaningless opposition and did great harm to them and others. The Mother's consciousness and mine are the same, the one Divine Consciousness in two, because that is necessary for the play. Nothing can be done without her knowledge and force, without her consciousness—if anybody really feels her consciousness, he should know that I am there behind it and if he feels me it is the same with hers. If a separation is made like that (I leave aside the turns which their minds so strongly put upon these things),

how can the Truth establish itself—from the Truth there is no such separation.

13-11-1934

(2)

The Mother's consciousness is the divine consciousness and the Light that comes from it is the light of the Divine Truth. One who receives and accepts and lives in the Mother's light, will begin to see the truth on all the planes, the mental, the vital, the physical. He will reject all that is undivine, —the undivine is the falsehood, the ignorance, the error of the dark forces; the undivine is all that is obscure and unwilling to accept the Divine Truth and its light and force. The undivine, therefore, is all that is unwilling to accept the light and force of the Mother. That is why I am always telling you to keep in contact with the Mother and her Light and Force, because it is only so that you can come out of this confusion and obscurity and receive the Truth that comes from above.

When we speak of the Mother's Light or my Light in a special sense, we are speaking of a special occult action—we are speaking of certain lights that come from the Supermind. In this action the

Mother's is the White Light that purifies, illumines, brings down the whole essence and power of the Truth and makes the transformation possible. But, in fact, all light that comes from above from the highest divine Truth is the Mother's.

There is no difference between the Mother's path and mine; we have and always had the same path, the path that leads to the supramental change and the divine realisation; not only at the end, but from the beginning they have been the same.

The attempt to set up a division and opposition putting the Mother on one side and myself on another and opposite or quite different side, has always been a trick of the forces of Falsehood when they want to prevent a sadhak from reaching the Truth. Dismiss all such falsehoods from your mind.

Know that the Mother's light and force are the light and force of the Truth; remain always in contact with the Mother's light and force, then only can you grow into the divine Truth.

10-9-1931

(3)

Whatever one gets from the Mother, comes from myself also—there is no difference. So, too, if I give

anything, it is by the Mother's Force that it goes to the sadhak.

20-8-1936

(4)

You consider that the Mother can be of no help to you....If you cannot profit by her help, you would find still less profit in mine. But, in any case, I have no intention of altering the arrangement I have made for all the disciples without exception that they should receive the light and force from her and not directly from me and be guided by her in their spiritual progress. I have made the arrangement not for any temporary purpose but because it is the one way, provided always the disciple is open and receives, that is true and effective (considering what she is and her power).

(5)

The Mother and myself stand for the same Power in two forms—so the perception in the dream was perfectly logical. Ishwara-Shakti, Purusha-Prakriti are only the two sides of the one Divine (Brahman).

1933

(6)

It is a very common experience, that of the identity between myself and the Mother (the perception that we are one) expressed in the fusing of the two images.

4-11-1935

(7)

Q: From the intimations frequently received from the play of lights seen in visions I am having a deep feeling that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are the same though we see them in different bodies. Is my feeling right?

A: Yes.

25-4-1933

(8)

The dream was an indication of what the Mother and myself are and represent—I do not think that it is necessary to say more than that. It indicates that the fulfilment of what we stand for is the Divine Love and Ananda.

1933

Sadhana before the Mother's Coming

(1)

It is not clear what your Guru meant by my sitting on the path; that could have been true of the period between 1915 and 1920 when I was writing the *Arya*, but the sadhana and the work were waiting for the Mother's coming. In 1923 or 1924, I could not be described as sitting on the path, so far as the sadhana was concerned, but it may perhaps be only a metaphor or symbol for the outward form of the work not yet being ready. The statement about my having gone too high to redescend for work in the world was made in almost the identical terms by another Yogi also; it referred to my condition at the time and cannot be taken as anything more.

16-9-1935

(2)

Q: X seems to have told Y that the old sadhaks, who were here before the Mother took up the work in 1926, had many experiences of Cosmic Consciousness and the sadhana was much better and more serious than now. How far is this true?

A: Before the Mother came all were living in the mind with only some mental realisations and experiences. The vital and everything else were unregenerated and the psychic behind the veil. I am not aware that anyone of them at that time entered the Cosmic Consciousness. At that time I was still seeking my way for the transformation and the passage to the Supramental (all the part of the Yoga that goes beyond the ordinary Vedanta) and acted very much on a principle of *laissez faire* with the few sadhaks who were there. X is one of those who have never ceased regretting that *laissez faire*—he regrets the vital liberty and absence of discipline they then had.

27-7-1934

.

III

DIFFICULTIES OF THE PATH-FINDERS

The Difficult Path

Nobody has found this Yoga a Grand Trunk Road, neither X nor Y nor even myself or the Mother. All such ideas are a romantic illusion.

August, 1935

The Burden of Humanity

(1)

We have had sufferings and struggles to which yours is a mere child's play; I have not made our cases equal to yours. I have said that the Avatar is one who comes to open the Way for humanity to a higher consciousness—if nobody can follow the Way, then either our conception of the thing, which is also that of Christ and Krishna and Buddha also, is all wrong or the whole life and action of the Avatar is quite futile. X seems to say that there is no way and no possibility of following, that the struggles and sufferings of the Avatar are unreal

and all humbug,—there is no possibility of struggle for one who represents the Divine. Such a conception makes nonsense of the whole idea of Avatarhood; there is then no reason in it, no necessity in it, no meaning in it. The Divine being all-powerful can lift people up without bothering to come down on earth. It is only if it is a part of the world-arrangement that he should take upon himself the burden of humanity and open the Way that Avatarhood has any meaning.

7-3-1935

(2)

You say that this way is too difficult for you or the likes of you and it is only "Avatars" like myself or the Mother that can do it. That is a strange misconception; for it is, on the contrary, the easiest and simplest and most direct way and anyone can do it, if he makes his mind and vital quiet...even those who have a tenth of your capacity can do it. It is the other way of tension and strain and hard endeavour that is difficult and needs a great force of tapasya. As for the Mother and myself, we have had to try all ways, follow all methods, to surmount mountains of difficulties, a far heavier burden to bear than you or anybody else in the Ashram or

outside, far more difficult conditions, battles to fight, wounds to endure, ways to cleave through impenetrable morass and desert and forest, hostile masses to conquer—work such as, I am certain, none else had to do before us. For the leader of the way in a work like ours has not only to bring down or represent and embody the Divine, but to represent too the ascending element in humanity and to bear the burden of humanity to the full and experience, not in a mere play or Lila but in grim earnest, all the obstruction, difficulty, opposition, baffled, hampered and only slowly victorious labour which are possible on the path. But it is not necessary, nor tolerable that all that should be repeated over again to the full in the experience of others. It is because we have the complete experience that we can show a straighter and easier road to others—if they will only consent to take it. It is because of our experience won at a tremendous price that we can urge upon you and others, “Take the psychic attitude; follow the straight sunlit path, with the Divine openly and secretly upbearing you—if secretly, he will yet show himself in good time,—do not insist on the hard, hampered, round-about and difficult journey.”

Preparing the Sunlit Path

Peace was the very first thing that the Yogis and seekers of old asked for and it was a quiet and silent mind—and that always brings peace—that they declared to be the condition for realising the Divine. A cheerful and sunlit heart is the fit vessel for the Ananda and who shall say that Ananda or what prepares it is an obstacle to the Divine union? As for despondency, it is surely a terrible burden to carry on the way. One has to pass through it sometimes like Christian of *The Pilgrim's Progress* through the Slough of Despond but its constant reiteration cannot be anything but an obstacle.... I know perfectly well that pain and suffering and struggle and accesses of despair are natural, though not inevitable on the way, not because they are helps but because they are imposed on us by the darkness of this human nature out of which we have to struggle into the Light.... Ramakrishna was not ignorant that there was a sunlit path of Yoga. He even seems to say that it is the quicker way as well as the better.

It is not because I have myself trod the sunlit way or flinched from difficulty and suffering and danger. I have had my full share of these things and the Mother has had ten times her full share.

But that was because the finders of the Way had to face these things in order to conquer. No difficulty that can come on the sadhak but has faced us on the path; against many we have had to struggle hundreds of times (in fact, that is an understatement) before we could overcome; many still remain protesting that they have a right until the perfect perfection is there. But we have never consented to admit their inevitable necessity for others. It is, in fact, to ensure an easier path to others hereafter that we have borne that burden. It was with that object that the Mother once prayed to the Divine that whatever difficulties, dangers, sufferings were necessary for the path might be laid on her rather than on others. It has been so far granted her as a result of daily and terrible struggles for years that those who put an entire and sincere confidence in her are able to follow the sunlit path and even those who cannot, yet when they do put the trust find their path suddenly easy and, if it becomes difficult again, it is only when distrust, revolt, *abhimān*, or other darknesses come upon them. The sunlit path is not altogether a fable.

But, you will ask, what of those who cannot? Well, it is for them I am putting forth all my efforts to bring down the Supramental Force within a measurable time. I know that it will descend but

I am seeking its near descent and, with whatever dark obstruction of the earth-nature or furious inroads of the Asuric forces seeking to prevent it, it is approaching the terrestrial soil. The Supramental is not, as you imagine, something cold, hard and rock-like. It bears within it the presence of Divine Love as well as the Divine Truth and its reign here means for those who accept it, the straight and thornless path in which there is no wall or obstacle, of which the ancient Rishis saw the far-off promise.

The dark path is there and there are many who make, like the Christians, a Gospel of spiritual suffering; many hold it to be the unavoidable price of victory. It may be so under certain circumstances, as it has been in so many lives at the beginning, or one may choose to make it so. But then the price has to be paid with resignation, fortitude or a tenacious resilience. I admit that, if borne in that way, the attacks of the dark forces or the ordeals that they impose have a meaning. After each victory gained over them, there is then a sensible advance; often they seem to show us the difficulties in ourselves which we have to overcome and to say: "Here you must conquer"; but all the same it is a too dark and difficult way which nobody should follow on whom the necessity does not lie.

So many have done Yoga relying on Tapasya or

anything else, but not confident of any Divine Grace. It is not that, but the soul's demand for a higher Truth or a higher Life that is indispensable. Where that is, the Divine Grace whether believed in or not will intervene. If you believe, that hastens and facilitates things; if you cannot yet believe, still the soul's aspiration will justify itself, with whatever difficulty and struggle.

Joyous Sacrifice

By the way, do you think that the Mother or myself or others who have taken up the spiritual life had not enjoyed life and that it is therefore that the Mother was able to speak of a joyous sacrifice? Or do you think we spent the preliminary stages in longing for the lost fleshpots of Egypt and that it was only later on we felt the joy of the spiritual sacrifice? Of course we didn't; we and many others had no difficulty on the score of giving up anything we thought necessary to give up and no hankering afterwards. Your rule is as usual a stiff rule that does not at all apply generally.

17-10-1935

Years of Self-Imposed Bareness

(*Re: somebody's remark about sadhaks or sadhikas putting on beautiful clothes etc.*)

After realisation whatever the Higher Will demands is the best—but first, detachment is the rule. To reach the freedom without the discipline and development is given to few. The Mother and myself went for years through the utmost self-imposed bareness of life.

15-11-1933

Knowledge of Human Nature

(1)

I think I know as much about the dualities, weaknesses, ignorance of human nature as you do and a great deal more. The idea that the Mother or I are spiritually great but ignorant of everything practical seems to be common in the Ashram. It is an error to suppose that to be on a high spiritual plane makes one ignorant or unobservant of the world or of human nature. If I know nothing of human nature or do not consider it, I am obviously unfit to be anybody's guide in the work of trans-

formation, for nobody can transform human nature if he does not know what human nature is, does not see its workings or even if he sees, does not take them into consideration at all. If I think that the human plane is like the plane or planes of infinite Light, Power, Ananda, infallible Will Force, then I must be either a stark lunatic or a gibbering imbecile or a fool so abysmally idiotic as to be worth keeping in a museum as an exhibit.

30-4-1937

(2)

No need of logic to see that—a little common sense is sufficient. If anyone, no matter who he be, thinks that this world of ignorance, limitation and suffering is a plane of eternal and infinite Light, Power and Ananda, infallible Will and Power, what can he be but a self-deceiving fool or lunatic? And where then would be the need of bringing down the said Light, Power etc. from the higher planes, if it was already gambolling about all over this blessed earth and its absurd troop of human-animal beings? But perhaps you are of the opinion of X. The Divine is here, how can he descend from anywhere? The Divine may be here, but he has covered here

his Light with darkness of Ignorance and his Ananda with suffering; that, I should think makes a big difference to the plane and, even if one enters into that sealed Light etc. it makes a difference to the consciousness but very little to the Energy at work in this plane.

3-5-1937

Faith Founded on Knowledge

I must remind you that I have been an intellectual myself and no stranger to doubts—both the Mother and myself have had one side of the mind as positive and as insistent on practical results and more so than any Russell can be. We could never have been contented with the shining ideas and phrases which a Rolland or another takes for gold coin of Truth. We know well what is the difference between a subjective experience and a dynamic outward-going and realising Force. So although we have faith, (and who ever did anything great in the world without having faith in his mission or the Truth at work behind him?) we do not found ourselves on faith alone, but on a great

ground of knowledge which we have been developing and testing all our lives. I think I can say that I have been testing day and night for years upon years more scrupulously than any scientist his theory or his method on the physical plane. That is why I am not alarmed by the aspect of the world around me or disconcerted by the often successful fury of the adverse Forces who increase in their rage as the Light comes nearer and nearer to the field of earth and Matter.

If I believe in the probability and not only possibility, if I feel practically certain of the Supramental Descent (I do not fix a date), it is because I have my grounds for the belief, not a faith in the air. I know that the Supramental Descent is inevitable—I have faith in view of my experience that the time can be and should be now and not in a later age....But even if I knew it to be for a later time, I would not swerve from my path or be discouraged or flag in my labour. Formerly I might have been, but not *now*—after all the path I have traversed. When one is sure of the Truth, or even when one believes the thing one pursues to be the only possible solution, one does not stipulate for an immediate success, one travels towards the Light taking as well worth while and facing every risk of the adventure. Still, like you, it is now, in

this life that I insist on it and not in another or in the hereafter.

30-8-1932

Steps in Advance

I am afraid I cannot endorse your reading of the situation, at least so far as the Mother and myself and the prospects of the work are concerned. I can agree only that we have had a heavy time of it recently and that there has been a strong attack on the plane of the physical and material—but that (heavy attacks) is a thing we have been accustomed to for the last 30 years and it has never prevented us from making any necessary advance. I have never had any illusions about the path being comfortable and easy; I knew all along that the work could only be done if all the essential difficulties rose and were faced; so their rising cannot tire or dishearten me, whatever obstinacy there may be in the difficulties, whether our own or in the sadhaks or in Nature.

No, I am not tired or on the point of giving up. I have made inwardly steps in front in the last two or three months which had seemed impossible

because of the obstinate resistance for years together, and it is not an experience which pushes me to despair and to give up. If there is much resistance on one side, there have been large gains on the other—all has not been a picture of sterile darkness. You yourself are kept back only by the demon of doubt which bangs on you each door as you are opening it; you have only to set about resolutely slaying the Rakshasa and the doors will open to you as they have done to many others who were held up by their own mind or vital nature.

12-1-1934

The Increasing Descent

It is true that there is an increasingly powerful descent of the Higher Force. Many now see the lights and colours around the Mother and her subtle luminous forms—it means that their vision is opening to supraphysical realities, it is not a phantasy. The colours or lights you see are forces from various planes and each colour indicates a special force.

The supramental Force is descending, but it has not yet taken possession of the body or of matter

—there is still much resistance to that. It is supramentalised Overmind Force that has already touched, and this may at any time change into or give place to the Supramental in its own native power.

14-9-1934

The Long Process of the Descent

I do not know who was X's informant, but certainly the Mother never said to anybody that the Supermind was to descend on the 24th November. Dates cannot be fixed like that. The descent of the Supermind is a long process, or at least a process with a long preparation, and one can only say that the work is going on sometimes with a strong pressure for completion, sometimes retarded by the things that rise from below and have to be dealt with before further progress can be made. The process is a spiritual evolutionary process, concentrated into a brief period—it could be done otherwise (by what men would regard as a miraculous intervention) only if the human mind were more flexible and less attached to its ignorance than it is. As we envisage it, it must manifest in a few first and then spread, but it is not likely to overpower the earth in a

moment. It is not advisable to discuss too much what it will do and how it will do it, because these are things the Supermind itself will fix, acting out of that Divine Truth in it, and the mind must not try to fix for it grooves in which it will run. Naturally, the release from subconscient ignorance and from disease, duration of life at will, and a change in the functionings of the body must be among the ultimate elements of a supramental change; but the details of these things must be left for the Supramental Energy to work out according to the truth of its own nature.

18-10-1934

Resistance to the Descent

When I wrote in my letters about the Supermind and the obstinate resistance, I spoke of course of something I had already spoken of before. I did not mean that the resistance was of an unexpected character or had altered anything essential. But in its nature the Descent is not something arbitrary and miraculous but a rapid evolutionary process compressed into a few years which proceeds by taking up the present nature into its Light and pouring

its Truth into the inferior planes. That cannot be done in the whole world at a time, but it is done like all such processes, first through selected Adharas and then on a wider scale. We have to do it through ourselves first and through the circle of sadhaks gathered around us in the terrestrial consciousness as typified here. If a few open, that is sufficient for the process to be possible. On the other hand, if there is a general misunderstanding and resistance (not in all, but in many) that makes it difficult and the process more laborious, but it does not make it impossible. I was not suggesting that it has become impossible, but that if the circumstances were made unfavourable by our being unable to concentrate enough on this thing of capital importance and having too much work to do of an irrelevant kind, the Descent was likely to take longer than it would do otherwise. Certainly, when the Supramental does touch earth with a sufficient force to dig itself in into the earth consciousness, there will be no more chance of any success or survival for the Asuric Maya.

The rest that I spoke of about the human and the divine had to do with the intermediate period between before it is done. What I meant was that if the Mother were able to bring out the Divine Personalities and Powers into her body and physical

being as she was doing for several months without break some years ago, the brightest period in the history of the Ashram, things would be much more easy and all these dangerous attacks that now take place would be dealt with rapidly and would in fact be impossible. In those days when the Mother was either receiving the sadhaks for meditation or otherwise working and concentrating all night and day without sleep and with very irregular food, there was no ill-health and no fatigue in her and things were proceeding with a lightning swiftness. The Power used was not that of the Supermind, but of the Overmind but it was sufficient for what was being done. Afterwards, because the lower vital and the physical of the sadhaks could not follow, the Mother had to push the Divine Personalities and Powers, through which she was doing the action, behind a veil and came down into the physical human level and act according to its conditions and that means difficulty, struggle, illness, ignorance and inertia. All has been for long slow, difficult, almost sterile in appearance, and now it is again becoming possible to go forward. But for the advance to be anything like general or swift in its process, the attitude of the sadhaks, not of a few only, must change. They must cling less to the conditions and feelings of the external physical consciousness and open themselves to

the true consciousness of the Yogin and sadhak. If they did that, the inner eye would open and they would not be bewildered or alarmed if the Mother again manifested externally something of the Divine Personalities and Powers as she did before. They would not be asking her to be always on their level, but would be glad to be drawn swiftly or gradually up towards hers. The difficulties would be ten times less and a larger easier securer movement possible.

This was what I meant and, I suppose, I manifested some impatience at the slowness of so many to realise what is after all a logical conclusion from the very principle of our Yoga which is that of a transformation, all that is disharmonious in human nature being enlightened out of existence, all that makes for harmony being changed into its divine equivalent, purer, greater, nobler, more beautiful and much being added which has been lacking to the human evolution. I meant that things could move more swiftly towards this if the sadhaks had a less ignorant attitude, but if they could not yet reach that, we had of course to go on anyhow until the supramental descent came down to the material level.

Finally, you must get rid of this gratuitous tendency to despair. The difficulty for you has been created by the indulgence given to the formation I speak of; that finally dismissed, the difficulty would

disappear. Progress might be slow at first, but progress would come; it would quicken afterwards and with the supramental force here, there would be for you as for others the full speed and certitude.

18-10-1934

(2)

You will say, "But at present the Mother has drawn back and it is the Supramental that is to blame, because it is in order to bring down the Supramental into Matter that she retires." The Supramental is not to blame; the Supramental could very well have come down into Matter under former conditions, if the means created by the Mother for the physical and vital contact had not been vitiated by the wrong attitude, the wrong reactions in the Ashram atmosphere. It was not the direct supramental Force that was acting, but an intermediate and preparatory force that carried in it a modified Light derived from the Supramental, but this would have been sufficient for the work of opening the way for the highest action, if it had not been for the irruption of these wrong forces on the yet unconquered lower (physical) vital material plane. The inter-

ference was creating adverse possibilities which could not be allowed to continue. The Mother would not have retired otherwise; and even as it is, it is not meant as an abandonment of the field but is only (to borrow a now current phrase from a more external enterprise) a temporary strategic retirement, *reculer pour mieux sauter*. The Supramental is therefore not responsible; on the contrary, it is the descent of the Supramental that would end all the difficulties.

14-1-1932

Descent of Sadhana into the Physical

Q: When the sadhana is going on in the physical plane, have all the sadhaks to come down into the physical consciousness, or only those who have much inertia and impurity in them, as in my case?

A: It is a little difficult to say whether all have to come down totally into the physical. The Mother and I had to do it because the work could not be otherwise done. We had tried to do it from above through the mind and higher vital, but it could not be because the sadhaks were not ready to

follow—their lower vital and physical refused to share in what was coming down or else misused it and became full of exaggerated and violent reactions. Since then the sadhana as a whole has come down along with us into the physical consciousness. Many have followed—some immediately without sufficient preparation in the mind and vital, some holding on to the vital and mind and living still between the three, some totally but with a prepared mind and vital. The total descent into the physical is a very troublesome affair—it means a long and trying pressure of difficulties, for the physical is normally obscure, inert, impervious to the Light. It is a thing of habits, very largely a slave of the subconscious and its mechanical reactions. It is less open to violent attacks than the vital except in the way of illness and some other movements, but it is dull and dreary to leave these until the Light, the Peace, the Force, the Joy come down from above and fix themselves. We would have preferred to do all the hard work ourselves there and called others down when an easier movement was established, but it did not prove possible.

I don't think it has anything to do with impurity. Only you came down a little too soon. At the moment it happened, the peace and silence of the Atman and the movement upward to realisation of

the Self above the head in the higher consciousness were about to establish themselves. If that had been done first, it would have been less difficult. It means a great struggle against the inertia to get these things done—but you have only to persevere and done they will surely be. The things will be much more easy for you.

31-12-1934

A New Power

A successful cure of X's mother would be certainly a considerable achievement and though difficult owing to the tenacity and malignance and extreme intractability of the disease, it is not impossible. What you say is true, the Force was acting before, but it acted with immediate rapidity and completeness only with those who had sufficient faith and receptivity (mainly sadhaks) or in other good conditions.

These cases seem to indicate a new power of the Force and a new technique. Your idea that it may spread and happen elsewhere is not without foundation; for, when once something is there in the earth-atmosphere that was not there before, it begins to

work on many sides in an unforeseen way. Thus, since the Yoga has been in action, its particular opening movements have come to a number of people who were at a distance and not connected with us and who understood nothing of what was happening to them. These things are to be expected for Nature is still in evolution and new Lights and Powers have to be brought down in her and made part of the conscious earth-existence.

29-1-1936

Fight on the Physical Plane

As for the question about the illness, perfection in the physical plane is indeed part of the ideal of the Yoga, but it is the last item and, so long as the fundamental change has not been made in the material consciousness to which the body belongs, one may have a certain perfection on other planes without having immunity in the body. We have not sought perfection for our own separate sake, but as part of a general change—creating a possibility of perfection for others. That could not have been done without our accepting and facing the difficulties of the realisation and transformation

and overcoming them for ourselves. It has been done to a sufficient degree on the other planes—but not yet on the most material part of the physical plane. Till it is done, the fight there continues and, though there may be and is a force of Yogic action and defence, there cannot be immunity. The Mother's difficulties are not her own; she bears the difficulties of others and those that are inherent in the general action and working for the transformation. If it had been otherwise, it would be a very different matter.

August, 1936

IV

HELPERS ON THE WAY

Reason for Forming the Ashram

(1)

There was no Ashram at first, only a few people came to live near Sri Aurobindo and practise Yoga. It was only some time after the Mother came from Japan that it took the form of the Ashram, more from the wish of the sadhaks who desired to entrust their whole inner and outer life to the Mother than from any intention or plan of hers or of Sri Aurobindo.

(2)

The facts are: In the meantime, the Mother, after a long stay in France and Japan, returned to Pondicherry on the 24th April, 1920. The number of disciples then showed a tendency to increase rather rapidly. When the Ashram began to develop, it fell to the Mother to organise it; Sri Aurobindo soon

retired into seclusion and the whole material and spiritual charge of it devolved on her.

(3)

Q: On what date in 1926 did Mother take up the full charge of the Ashram?

A: Mother does not at all remember the correct date. It may have been a few days after 15th August. She took up the work completely when I retired.

16-5-1936

The Ashram Precincts

What are the Ashram precincts? Every house in which the sadhaks of the Ashram live is in the Ashram precincts. People have a queer way of talking of the houses in this compound as the Ashram—it has no meaning. Or do they think that the Mother's influence or mine is shut up in a compound?

January, 1935

Law of Dealing with Sadhaks

The Mother and myself deal with all according to the law of the Divine. We receive alike rich and poor, those who are high-born or low-born according to human standards, and extend to them an equal love and protection. Their progress in sadhana is our main concern—for they have come here for that, not to satisfy their palates or their bellies, not to make ordinary vital demands or to quarrel about position or place or comforts. That progress depends on how they answer to the Mother's love or protection—whether they receive the forces she pours on all alike, whether they use or misuse what she gives them. But the Mother has no intention or obligation to deal with all outwardly in the same way—the demand that she should do so is absurd and imbecile—and if she did it, she would prove false to the truth of things and the law of the Divine. Each sadhak has to be dealt with according to his nature, his capacities, his real needs (not his claims or desires) and according to what is best for his spiritual welfare. As to how it is to be done, we refuse to be dictated to by the ignorance of those of the sadhaks who consider that the Mother must act according to their standards or their ideas of equality or justice or the

demands of their vital or the notions they have brought with them from the outside world. We act according to the Light within us and for the Truth that we are striving to establish in this earthly Nature.

11-12-1933

The Initial Demand

What you say about those whom we receive—that if one part of them sincerely desires the Divine we give them their chance—is quite true. If we demanded more at the beginning, exceedingly few would be able even to commence this journey towards the Divine.

24-4-1935

Sole Duty to Sadhaks

It is no question of fault or punishment—if we have to condemn and punish people for their faults and deal with the sadhaks like a tribunal of justice, no sadhana could be possible. I do not see how your reproach against us is justifiable. Our

sole duty to the sadhaks is to take them towards their spiritual realisation—we cannot behave like the head of a family intervening in domestic quarrels, supporting one, putting our weight against the other! However often X may stumble, we have to take him by the hand, lift him up again and get him to move once more towards the Divine. We have always done the same with you.

29-3-1933

Overwhelming Compassion

Q: I am overwhelmed at the patience and compassion with which you put up with our insincerities, disobediences and loosenesses.

A: Human nature is like that in its very grain; so if we are not patient, there would be little hope of its changing. But there is something else in the human being which is sincere and can be a force for the change. The difficulty in people like X is to get at that something (it is so covered up) and get it to act.

8-7-1934

Comparison with Sadhaks

(1)

I did not mean anyone here could replace or equal myself and the Mother...but certainly it is possible for X, Y and Z to change, to throw off their present personalities or limitations and come nearer to us than they are now—if they have the sincere will and make the endeavour.

10-8-1935

(2)

Even the overmind is for all but the Mother and myself either unrealised or only an influence, mostly subjective.

24-3-1934

Work for Sadhaks

(1)

Is it beneath your dignity to do work for the sadhaks? It is an entirely egoistic attitude and im-

proper for a sadhak. All the people in the D.R., in the Building Service, in the Stores, in the carpentry department, in the Atelier and Smithy, are all the time doing work for the sadhaks, the Mother herself is doing work for the sadhaks all day; in writing this answer I am spending my time doing work for a sadhak. Would you think it proper for the D.R. and Kitchen workers to say, "We are not going to cook for sadhaks or serve them; it is beneath our dignity. We will consent only to cook food for the Mother alone." Do you want me to stop writing answers to your letter on the ground that I am doing work for a sadhak and I will write only letters to the Mother and nobody else?

What was X doing in the kitchen so many years if not preparing the food of the sadhaks? And what was Y doing in the granary if not work for the sadhaks? All these ideas are perfectly idiotic. All work given by the Mother is work for the Mother.

November, 1938

(2)

The books and letters are not going to be discontinued—but I shall have to take one day off in the

week (Sunday). The volume of the correspondence is becoming enormous and it takes me all the night and a good part of the day—apart from the work done separately by the Mother who has also to work the greater part of the night in addition to her day's work. It is this that makes the Pranam later and later, for we do not finish till 7.30 or after. Also much work falls in arrears and piles up and many things that have their importance have had to be discontinued. Some relief is necessary.

19-12-1933

Two Elements in Spiritual Success

The help (I am not speaking of a divine intervention from above but of my help and the Mother's) will be there. It can be effective in spite of your physical mind, but it will be more effective if the steady working will of which I speak is there as its instrument. There are always two elements in spiritual success—one's own steady will and endeavour and the Power that in one way or another helps and gives the result of the endeavour.

26-1-1934

Receiving Help through Writing

(1)

Q: You and the Mother are supposed to know what is going on in us, how and what we are aspiring for, how our nature is reacting to help and guidance. What is then the necessity of writing to you all that?

A: It is necessary for you to be conscious and to put your self-observation before us; it is on that that we can act. A mere action on our observation without any corresponding consciousness in that part of the sadhak would lead to nothing.

7-1-1936

(2)

It is an undoubted fact proved by hundreds of instances that for many the exact statement of their difficulties to us is the best and often, though not always, an immediate, even an instantaneous means of release. This has often been seen by sadhaks not only here, but far away, and not only for inner difficulties, but for illness and outer pressure of unfavourable circumstances. But for that a certain attitude is necessary—either a strong faith in the

mind and vital or a habit of reception and response in the inner being. Where this habit has been established, I have seen it to be almost unfailingly effective, even when the faith was uncertain or the outer expression in the mind vague, ignorant or in its form mistaken or inaccurate. Moreover, this method succeeds most when the writer can write as a witness of his own movements and state them with an exact and almost impartial precision, as a phenomenon of his nature or the movement of a force affecting him from which he seeks release. On the other hand, if in writing his vital gets seized by the thing he is writing of and takes up the pen for him,—expressing and often supporting doubt, revolt, depression, despair, it becomes a very different matter. Even here sometimes the expression acts as a purge; but also the statement of the condition may lend energy to the attack, at least for the moment, and may seem to enhance and prolong it, exhausting it by its own violence perhaps for the time and so bringing in the end a relief, but at a heavy cost of upheaval and turmoil—and the risk of the recurring decimal movement, because the release has come by temporary exhaustion of the attacking force, not by rejection and purification through the intervention of the Divine Force with the unquestioning assent and support of the sadhak. There has been

a confused fight, an intervention in a hurly-burly, not a clear alignment of forces—and the intervention of the helping force is not felt in the confusion and the whirl. This is what used to happen in your crises; the vital in you was deeply affected and began supporting and expressing the reasonings of the attacking force,—in place of a clear observation and expression of the difficulty by the vigilant mind laying the state of things in the light for the higher Light and Force to act upon it, there was a vehement statement of the case for the Opposition. Many sadhaks (even “advanced”) had made a habit of this kind of expression of their difficulties and some still do it; they cannot even yet understand that it is not the way. At one time it was a sort of gospel in the Ashram that this was the thing to be done,—I don’t know on what ground, for it was never part of my teaching about the Yoga,—but experience has shown that it does not work; it lands one in the recurring decimal notation, an unending round of struggle. It is quite different from the movement of self-opening that succeeds, (here too not necessarily in a moment, but still sensibly and progressively) and of which those are thinking who insist on everything being opened to the Guru so that the help may be more effectively there.

17-12-1932

Reliance in Protection

You have to develop the power and the habit of taking refuge in the protection of the Mother and myself. It is for this reason that the habit of criticising and judging by the outer mind or cherishing its preconceived ideas and formations must disappear. You should repeat always to yourself when it tries to rise, "Sri Aurobindo and the Mother know better than myself—they have the experience and knowledge which I have not—they must surely be acting for the best and in a greater light than that of ordinary human knowledge." If you can fix that idea in yourself so that it will remain even in clouded moments you will be able to face much more easily the suggestions of the Asuric Maya.

•

Pressure to Liberate

We are sorry that you have suffered so much. It was not to hurt you that the Mother put the pressure, but to liberate. It has always been with a deep affection and sympathy with you in your struggles that she has tried to help you. I trust you will recover soon your ease of mind and peace. I will try to give you all the help possible.

23-1-1935

Personal Contact and Receptivity to Force

(I)

It is not possible to accept X's suggestion about joining with those who are in personal attendance upon me. They were not admitted as a help to their sadhana but for practical reasons. In fact, here also there is some misconception. Continual personal contact does not necessarily bring out the action of the Force. Hriday had that personal contact with Sri Ramakrishna and the opportunity of personal service to him, but he received nothing except on one occasion and then he could not contain the force and the realisation which the Master had put into him. The feeling of losing himself which X had was on the special occasions of the Darshan and the Pranam to the Mother. That he had this response shows that he can answer to the Force, that he has the receptivity, as we say, and that is a great thing, for all do not have it and those who have it are not always conscious of its cause but only of its result. But he should reason less and rather try to keep himself open as he was in those moments. If I have written about Force, it is because both the Mother and myself have had many thousand experiences in which it acted and produced results of every kind. This idea of the Force has nothing to do with theory

or reasoning but is felt constantly by every Yogi; it is part of his normal Yogic consciousness and his constant spiritual activity.

28-5-1945

(2)

Q: Is it not likely that more outward nearness and familiarity with you or the Mother may mean less aspiration and less inner growth?

A: It depends on the person. Some profit, some do not. No general statement can be made.

18-8-1933

Action of Force on the Subtle Body

As to the dream, it was not a dream but an experience of the inner being in a conscious dream state, *svapna-samādhi*. The numbness and the feeling of being about to lose consciousness are always due to the pressure or descent of a Force to which the body is not accustomed, but feels strongly. Here it was not the physical body that was being directly pressed, but the subtle body, *sukṣma śarīra*, in which the inner being more intimately dwells and

in which it goes out in sleep or trance or in the moment of death. But the physical body in these vivid experiences feels as if it was itself that was having the experience; the numbness was the effect in it of the pressure. The pressure on the whole body would mean a pressure on the whole inner consciousness, perhaps for some modification or change which would make it more ready for knowledge or experience; the third or fourth rib would indicate a region which belongs to the vital nature, the domain of the life-force, some pressure for a change there.

The strength of the hand, the weight would not necessarily indicate that it was mine—for it was an experience not of the physical hand or in the physical body, but in the subtle realms of the being and there the Mother's touch and pressure might well be stronger and heavier than mine. The Mother does not remember the date, but one night about that period she was thinking strongly about her and putting a pressure for the removal of some obstacle to a spiritual opening. It is possible that this was what produced the experience. If it was myself, it must have been at a time when I was concentrating and sending the force to different people, but I remember nothing precise. I have often thought of her of course and sent a force to help her.

It is not necessary for us always to be physically conscious of the action, for it is often carried out when the mind is occupied with outward things or when we sleep. The Mother's sleep is not sleep but an inner consciousness in which she is in connection with people or working everywhere. At the time she is aware, but she does not carry all that always into her waking consciousness or in her memory. A call would come in the occupied waking mind as the thought of the person coming—in a more free or in a concentrated state as a communication from the person in question; in a deeper concentration or in sleep or trance she would see the person coming and speaking to her or she herself going there. Besides that, wherever the Force is working, the Presence is there.

.

28-9-1936

Unconscious Reception of Force

It is not true that you have never received Force from us: you have received it to any extent; it can only be said that you were not conscious of it, but that happens with many. Certainly none of the sadhaks

receives or uses all the Force that the Mother sends, but that is a general fact and not peculiar to you.

29-5-1936

Action of Force under Conditions

(1)

As for the Force, I shall write some other time. I have told you that it is not always efficacious, but works under conditions like all forces; it is only the supramental Force that works absolutely, because it creates its own conditions. But the Force I am using is a Force that has to work under the present world conditions. It is not the less a Force for that. I have cured myself of all illnesses except three by it and those too when they come I have kept in check; the fact that I have not succeeded yet in eliminating the fact or probability of those three does not cancel the fact of my success with the others. As for the Mother, she used formerly to cure everything at once by the same Power—now she has no time to think about her body or to concentrate on it. The prevalence of illness just now is a fact; it is part of the struggle that is going on in the domain of Matter. But even so there are plenty of people in the Ashram who get

rid of their ills by reliance on the Mother. If all cannot do it, what does that prove or disprove? It only proves that the power does not work absolutely, miraculously, impossibly, but it works by certain given means and under conditions. I have always said that, so what is there in that that is new or that annihilates the truth of the Yoga?

6-2-1935

(2)

Q: You say that with the growth of the inner consciousness one can feel the forces of illness coming; one can feel its symptoms in the subtle physical sheath and can destroy it before its manifestation. How then do you explain your illness or that of the sadhaks which surely you can see coming, even if we can't?

A: Always the same rigid mental that turns everything into a statement of miraculous absoluteness! It is my experience and the Mother's that all illnesses pass through the subtle consciousness and subtle body before they enter the physical. If one is conscious, one can stop it entering the

physical, one can develop the power to do so. We have done that millions of times. But that does not mean that every time we will do so. It may come without one's noticing or when one is asleep or through the subconscious or in a sudden rush when one is off one's guard etc., etc. Let us suppose, however, that I am always on guard, always conscious even in sleep—that does not mean that I am immunised in my very nature from all illness. It only means a power of self-defence against it, when it tries to come. Self-defence may become so strong that the body becomes practically immune as many Yogis' are. Still this "practically" does not mean "absolutely". The absoluteness can only come with the supramental change. For below the supramental it is an action of a Force among many forces—in the supramental, it becomes a law of the nature.

26-3-1935

Receptivity to Force in Curing Illness

(1)

I mean a certain receptivity in the consciousness—mind, vital, physical, whichever is needed. The Mother or myself send a force. If there is

no openness, the force may be thrown back or return (unless we put a great force which is not advisable to do) as from an obstruction or resistance: if there is some openness, the result may be partial or slow; if there is the full openness or receptivity, then the result may be immediate. Of course, there are things that cannot be removed all at once, being an old part of the nature, but with receptivity these also can be more effectively and rapidly dealt with. Some people are so open that even by writing they get free before the book or letter reaches us.

8-6-1933

(2)

It depends on how far the inner being is awake—otherwise one needs a physical *avalambana*. There are some people who get the relief only after we read a letter, others get it immediately they write or before it has reached us or after it has reached but before we have read. Others get it simply by referring the whole matter to us mentally. Idiosyncracies!

March, 1935

Need of Correct Information

Q: If, after the Mother or you start working spiritually on somebody reported to be ill but personally unknown, some wrong information is given about his or her identity, does the help sent miss its mark?

A: Wrong information coming across the working creates a confusion so that it is no longer possible to say what is the result. Of course, if the wrong information comes at the beginning, it would be still worse. It is very necessary that the information given should be correct.

10-6-1935

Working of Force through Doctors

The Mother and I have no preference for allopathy. The Mother thinks doctors very usually make things worse instead of better by spoiling Nature's resistance to illness by excessive and ill-directed use of their medicines. We have been able to work through X's homoeopathy far better than through anything else—though it is likely that the Force working through homoeopaths, who were not conscious instruments, might not have succeeded better than with the allopaths.

Sadhana and Sports

(I)

Certainly, we do not want only sportsmen in the Ashram: that would make it not an Ashram but a playground. The sports and physical exercises are primarily for the children of the school and they also do not play only but have to attend to their studies as well. Incidentally, they have improved immensely in health and in discipline and conduct as one very valuable result. Secondly, the younger sadhaks are allowed, not enjoined or even recommended, to join in these sports, but certainly they are not supposed to be sportsmen only: they have other and more important things to do. To be a sportsman must necessarily be a voluntary choice and depends on one having the taste and inclination. There are plenty of people around the Mother herself—X for instance—who would never dream of frequenting the playground or engaging in sports and the Mother also would never think of asking him to do so. So, equally, she could not think of being displeased with you for shunning these delights. Some, of course, might ask why any sports at all in an Ashram which ought to be concerned only with meditation and inner experiences and the escape from life into the Brah-

man. But that applies only to the ordinary kind of Ashram to which we have got accustomed and this is not that orthodox kind of Ashram. It includes life in Yoga, and once we admit life we can include anything that we find useful for life's ultimate and immediate purpose and not inconsistent with the works of the Spirit. After all, the orthodox Ashram came into being only after Brahman began to shun all connection with the world and the shadow of Buddhism stalked over all the land and the Ashrams turned into monasteries. The old Ashrams were not entirely like that; the boys and young men who were brought up in them were trained in many things belonging to life; the son of Pururavas and Urvashi practised archery in the Ashram of a Rishi and became an expert bowman, and Karna became disciple of a great sage in order to acquire from him the use of powerful weapons. So there is no *a priori* ground why sports should be excluded from life of an Ashram like ours where we are trying to equate life with the Spirit. Even table-tennis and football need not be rigorously excluded. But putting all persiflage aside, my point is that to play or not to play is a matter of choice and inclination and it would be absurd for Mother to be displeased with you any more than with X for not caring to be a sportsman. So you need not

have any apprehension on this score; that the Mother should be displeased with you for that is quite impossible. So the idea that she wished to draw away from you for anything done or not done was a misinterpretation without any real foundation since you have given no ground for it and there was nothing farther from her mind. She has herself explained that it was just the contrary that has been in her mind for sometime past and it was an increasing kindness that was her feeling and intention. The only change she could expect from you was to grow in your psychic and spiritual endeavour and inner progress and in this you have not failed—quite the contrary. Apart from that, the notion that she could be displeased because you did not change according to this or that pattern is a wild idea; it would be most arbitrary and unreasonable.

10-7-1948

(2)

The Mother does not want anybody to take up the sports if he has no inclination or natural bent for them; to join or not to join must be quite voluntary and those who do not join are not cold-shouldered or looked down upon by her for that reason. It

would be absurd for her to take that attitude: there are those who do her faithful service which she deeply appreciates and whom she regards with affection and confidence but who never go to the playground either because they have no turn for it or no time,—can you imagine that for that reason she will turn away from them and regard them with coldness? The Mother could never intend that sports should be the sole or the chief preoccupation of the inmates of the Ashram; even the children of the school for whose physical development these sports and athletic exercises are important and for whom they were originally intended, have other things to do, their work, their studies and other occupations and amusements in which they are as interested as in these athletics. There are other things more important: there are Yoga, spiritual progress, bhakti, devotion, service....

I do not understand what you mean by my “giving time to sports”: I am not giving any time to it except that I have written at Mother’s request an article for the first number of the Bulletin and another for the forthcoming number. It is the Mother who is doing all the rest of the work for the organisation of the sports and that she must do, obviously, till it is sufficiently organised to go on of itself with only a general supervision from above and her actual presence once in the day. I put out my force to support her as

in all the other work of the Ashram, but otherwise I am not giving any time for the sports.

4-3-1949

(3)

There is no need for anyone to take up sports as indispensable for Yoga or enjoying the Mother's affection and kindness. Yoga is its own object and has its own means and conditions; sports is something quite different as the Mother herself indicated to you when she said that the concentration practised on the playground was not meditation and was used for the efficacy in the movements and not for any purpose of Yoga.

14-3-1949

(4)

It is also not a fact that either the Mother or I are turning away from Yoga and intend to interest ourselves only in sport; we have no intention whatever of altering the fundamental character of the Ashram and replacing it by a sportive association. If we did that it would be a most idiotic act and if

anybody should have told you anything like that, he must be off his head or in a temporary crisis of delirious enthusiasm for a very upside-down idea. The Mother told you very clearly once that what was being done in the playground was not meditation or a concentration for Yoga but only an ordinary concentration for the physical exercises alone. If she is busy with the organisation of these things—and it is not true that she is busy with that alone—it is in order to get finished with that as soon as possible after which it will go on of itself without her being at all engrossed or specially occupied by it, as is the case with other works of the Ashram. As for myself, it is surely absurd to think that I am neglecting meditation and Yoga and interested only in running, jumping and marching! There seem to have been strange misunderstandings about my second message in the Bulletin. In the first, I wrote about sports and their utility just as I have written on politics or social development or any other matter. In the second, I took up the question incidentally because people are expressing ignorance as to why the Ashram should concern itself with sports at all. I explained why it had been done and dealt with the more general question of how this and other human activities could be part of a search for a total perfection of all parts of the being including the

body and more especially what would be the nature of the perfection of the body. I indicated clearly that only by Yoga could there come a supreme and total perfection of all the instruments of the Spirit and the ascent of the whole being to the highest level and a divine life on earth and the assumption of a divine body. I made it clear that by human and physical means such as sports only a limited and precarious human perfection could come. In all this there is nothing to justify the idea that sport could be a means for jumping into the Supermind or that the Supermind was going to descend on the playground and nowhere else and only those who are there will receive it; that would be a bad look-out for me as I would have no chance!

I write all this in the hope of clearing away all the strange misconceptions with which the air seems to have become thick and by some of which you may have been affected.

27-4-1949

(5)

You ought to be able to see that your idea of our insistence on you to take up sport or to like it

and accept it in any way has no foundation. I myself have never been a sportsman or—apart from a spectator's interest in cricket in England or a non-player member of the Baroda cricket club—taken up any physical games or athletics except some exercises learnt from Madrasi wrestlers in Baroda such as *dand* and *baithak*, and those I took up only to put some strength and vigour into a frail and weak though not unhealthy body, but I never attached any other importance or significance to these things and dropped the exercises when I thought they were no longer necessary. Certainly, neither the abstinence from athletics and physical games nor the taking up of those physical exercises have for me any relevance to Yoga. Neither your aversion to sport nor the liking of others for it makes either you or them more fit or more unfit for sadhana. So there is absolutely no reason why we should insist on your taking it up or why you should trouble your mind with the supposition that we want you to do it. You are surely quite free, as everybody is quite free, to take your own way in such matters.

28-4-1949

(6)

The realisation of the Divine is the one thing needful and the rest is desirable only in so far as it helps or leads towards that or when it is realised, extends or manifests the realisation. Manifestation or organisation of the whole life for the Divine work: first, the sadhana personal and collective necessary for the realisation and a common life of the God-realised men, secondly, for help to the world to move towards that and to live in the Light, is the whole meaning and purpose of my Yoga. But the realisation is the first need and it is that round which all the rest moves, for apart from it all the rest would have no meaning. Neither the Mother nor myself ever dreamed or could dream of putting anything else in its place or neglecting it for anything else. Most of the Mother's day is in fact given to helping the sadhaks in one way or another towards that end, most of the rest is occupied with work for the Ashram which cannot be neglected or allowed to collapse, for this is too work for the Divine. As for the gymnasium, the playground and the rest of it, the Mother has made it plain from the beginning what place she assigned to these things; she has never done anything so imbecile as to replace essential things by these accessories

(7)

....Before coming to the main point I may as well clear out one matter not unconnected with it: my articles or messages, as they are called, in the Bulletin; for their appearance there and their contents seem to have caused some trouble, perplexity or misunderstanding in your mind and especially my speculations about the Divine Body. I wrote the first of these articles to explain about how and why sport came to be included in the programme of the Ashram activities and I think I made it clear, as I went on, that sport was not sadhana, that it belonged to what I called the lower end of things, but that it might be used not merely for amusement or recreation or the maintenance of health, but for a greater efficiency of the body and for the development of certain qualities and capacities, not of the body only but of morale and discipline and the stimulation of mental energies: but I pointed out also that these could be and were developed by other means and that there were limitations to this utility. In fact, it is only by sadhana that one could go beyond the limits natural to the lower end means. I think there was little room for misunderstanding here, but the Mother had asked me to write on other subjects

not connected in any way with sport and had suggested some such subjects as the possibilities of the evolution of a divine body; so I wrote on that subject and went on to speak of the Supermind and Truth-Consciousness which had obviously not even the remotest connection with sport. The object was to bring in something higher and more interesting than a mere record of gymnasium events but which might appeal to some of the readers and even to wider circles. In speaking of the divine body I entered into some far-off speculations about what might become possible in the future evolution of it by means of a spiritual force, but obviously the possibilities could not be anything near or immediate, and I said clearly enough that we should have to begin at the beginning and not attempt anything out of the way. Perhaps I should have insisted more on present limitations, but that I should now make clear. For the immediate object of my endeavours is to establish spiritual life on earth and for that the first necessity must always be to realise the Divine; only then can life be spiritualised or what I have called the Life Divine be made possible. The creation of something that could be called a divine body could be only an ulterior aim undertaken as part of this transformation, as, obviously, the development of such a

divine body as was visioned in these speculations could only come into view as the result of a distant evolution and need not alarm or distract anyone. It might even be regarded as a phantasy of some remotely possible future which might one day happen to come true.

I then come to the main point, namely that the intention attributed to the Mother of concentrating permanently on sports and withdrawing from other things pertinent to sadhana and our spiritual endeavour is a legend and a myth and has no truth in it. Except for the time given to her own physical exercise—ordinarily, two hours or sometimes three in the evening on the playground—the Mother's whole day from early morning and a large part of the night also has always been devoted to her other occupations connected with the sadhana—not her own but that of the sadhaks—pranam, blessings, meditation and receiving the sadhaks on the staircase or elsewhere, sometimes for two hours at a time, and listening to what they have to say, questions about the sadhana, results of their work or their matters, complaints, disputes, quarrels, all kinds of conferences about this or that to be decided and done—there is no end to the list: for the rest she had to attend to their letters, to reports about the material work of the Ashram and all

its many departments, correspondence and all sorts of things connected with the contacts with the outside world including often serious trouble and difficulties and the settlement of matters of great importance. All this has certainly nothing to do with sports and she had little occasion to think of it at all apart from the short time in the evening. There was here no ground for the idea that she was neglecting the sadhaks or the sadhana or thinking of turning her mind solely or predominantly to sport and still less for imputing the same preoccupation to me. Only during the period before the first and second December this year Mother had to give a great deal of time and concentration to the preparation of the events of those two days because she had decided on a big cultural program: her own play, *Vers l'Avenir*, dances, recitation from *Savitri* and from the *Prayers and Meditations* for the first December and also for a big and ambitious program for the second of sportive items and events. This meant a good deal more time for these purposes but hardly any interruption of her other occupations except for one or two of them just at the end of this period. There was surely no sufficient ground here either for drawing the conclusion that this was going to be for the future a normal feature of her action or a permanent change

in it or in the life of the Ashram ending in a complete withdrawal from spiritual life and an apotheosis of the Deity of Sport. Those who voiced this idea or declared that sport would henceforth be obligatory on all were indulging in fantasies that have no claim to credibility. As a matter of fact, the period of tension is over and after the second December things have returned to normal or even to subnormal in the activities of the playground and as for the future you may recall the proverb that "once is not for ever."

But there seems to be still a survival of the groundless idea that sportsmanship is obligatory henceforth on every sadhak and without it there is no chance of having the Mother's attention or favour. It is therefore necessary for me to repeat with the utmost emphasis the statement I made long ago when this fable became current for a time along, I think, with the rumour that the Supermind was to descend on the playground and the people who happen to be there at the time and nowhere else and on nobody else—which would have meant that I for one would never have it!! I must repeat what I said then, that the Mother had never imposed or has any idea of imposing any such obligation and had no reason for doing so. She does not want you or anybody else to take to sports if there is no

inclination or turn towards it. There are any number of people who enjoy her highest favour, among them some of her best and most valued workers, some most near to her and cherished by her who do not even set foot on the playground. Nobody then could possibly lose her favour or her affection by refusing to take up sport or by a dislike of sport or a strong disinclination towards it: these things are a matter of idiosyncrasy and nothing else. The idea, whether advanced or not by someone claiming to have authority to voice the Mother's intentions, that sport is now the most important thing with her and obligatory for sadhana is absurd in the extreme.

6-12-1949



Part Three

Sri Aurobindo
On
The Mother



I

WHO IS THE MOTHER

The Mother

Q: Do you not refer to the Mother (our Mother) in your book "The Mother"?

A: Yes.

Q: Is she not the "Individual" Divine Mother who has embodied "the power of these two vaster ways of existence"—Transcendent and Universal?

A: Yes.

Q: Has she not descended here (amongst us) into Darkness and Falsehood and Error and Death in her deep and great love for us?

A: Yes.

The Mother's Divinity

Q: There are many who hold the view that she was

human but now embodies the Divine Mother and her 'Prayers'¹, they hold, explain this view. But, to my mental conception, to my psychic feeling, she is the Divine Mother who has consented to put on her the cloak of obscurity and suffering and ignorance so that she can effectively lead us—human beings—to Knowledge and Bliss and Ananda and to the Supreme Lord. I also conceive that her 'Prayers' are meant to show us—the aspiring psychic—how to pray to the Divine. Am I right?

A: Yes. The Divine puts on an appearance of humanity, assumes the outward human nature in order to tread the path and show it to human beings, but does not cease to be the Divine. It is a manifestation that takes place, a manifestation of a growing Divine consciousness, not human turning into divine. The Mother was inwardly above the human even in childhood. So the view held by "many" is erroneous.

17-8-1938

*The Mother's Manifestation and the
Supramental Descent*

(I)

Q: Is there any difference between the Mother's

¹ *Prayers and Meditations of the Mother*

manifestation and the descent of the Supramental?

A: The Mother comes in order to bring down the supramental and it is the descent which makes her full manifestation here possible.

23-9-1935

(2)

Q: The Mother does not work on the sadhak directly from her own plane above, though she can do so if she wants to—she can even supramentalise the world in a day; but in that case the supramental Nature created here would be the same as it is above, and not the earth in Ignorance evolving into the supramental earth, a manifestation which will not be in appearance quite the same as what the Supermind is.

A: That is a very important truth.

17-6-1935

Purpose of the Mother's Embodiment

(1)

Q: Am I right in thinking that she as an individual embodies all the Divine Powers and brings down the

Grace more and more to the physical plane, and her embodiment is a chance for the entire physical consciousness to change and transform?

A: Yes. Her embodiment is a chance for the earth-consciousness to receive the Supramental into it and to undergo first the transformation necessary for that to be possible. Afterwards there will be a further transformation by the Supramental, but the whole earth-consciousness will not be supramentalised—there will be first a new race representing the Supermind, as man represents the mind.

13-8-1933

(2)

There is one divine Force which acts in the universe and in the individual and is also beyond the individual and the universe. The Mother stands for all these, but she is working here in the body to bring down something not yet expressed in this material world so as to transform life here—it is so that you should regard her as the Divine Shakti working here for that purpose. She is that in the body, but in her whole consciousness she is also identified with all the other aspects of the Divine.

(3)

There are not many Mothers, there is One in many forms. The transcendental is only one aspect of the Mother. I don't know what is meant by the embodied aspect of the transcendental Mother. There is the embodied aspect of the One Mother—what she manifests through it depends on herself.

7-7-1936

(4)

Q: Why does the Mother in her universal action act according to the law of things, but in her embodied physical by constant Grace?

A: It is the work of the Cosmic Power to maintain the cosmos and the law of the cosmos. The greater transformation comes from the Transcendent above the universal, and it is that transcendent Grace which the embodiment of the Mother is there to bring to action.

13-8-1933

(5)

There is the utility of the physical approach to the Mother—the approach of the embodied mind and

vital to her embodied Power. In her universal action the Mother acts according to the law of things—in her embodied physical action is the opportunity of a constant Grace—it is for that that the embodiment takes place.

12-8-1933

Different Appearances of the Mother

(1)

The Mother has many different personalities and her appearance varies according as one or another predominates. The something common, of course, exists. There is first, the one whom all these personalities manifest but that cannot be expressed in name or word—there is also the Supramental personality which from behind the veil presides over the aim of the present manifestation.

9-11-1933

(2)

The Mother has not only one appearance, but many at different times.

Behind the physical body there are many forms and powers and personalities of the Mother.

14-5-1933

(3)

Q: Two days back I saw in vision that the fire of aspiration was rising from my heart and going upward with the constant remembrance of the Mother. Then I saw that the Mother, as we see her in her physical body, was descending in the fire and filling all my parts with peace and strength. What does this vision indicate? Why did I see the Mother exactly as we see her in her physical body and not in her divine form?

A: It indicates an aspiration and an action for realisation in the external nature and not only in the inner being. When it is an inner action or an action of another plane one can see the Mother in any of her forms, but for realisation in the physical her appropriate form is that which she wears here.

15-7-1933

(4)

Q: Why does the Mother appear different at different times, as at Pranam or Prosperity or while giving the

interview? Sometimes even anatomical differences are visible. What is the reason of these differences in her appearance? Does it depend on the extent to which she turns outwards?

A: It is rather, I think, dependent on the personality that manifests in front—as she has many personalities and the body is plastic enough to express something of each when it comes forward.

4-12-1933

(5)

Q: Often when I see the Mother I feel as if she is the image of divine Ananda and her form looks like that of a young girl. Is there any truth in my feeling?

A: Ananda is not the only thing—there is Knowledge and Power and Love and many other powers of the Divine. As a special experience only it may stand.

30-4-1933

(6)

Yes. Many see like that, as if the Mother were taller than her ordinary physical appearance.

29-9-1933

II

ASPECTS AND POWERS OF THE MOTHER

Powers and Personalities—The Four Shaktis¹

The use of the word Power has already been explained—it can be applied to whatever or whoever exercises a conscious power in the cosmic field and has authority over the world-movement or some movement in it. But the Four² of whom you speak are also Shaktis, manifestations of different powers of the Supreme Consciousness and Force, the Divine Mother, by which she rules or acts in the universe. And they are at the same time divine personalities; for each is a being who manifests different qualities and personal consciousness-forms of the Godhead. All the greater Gods are in this way personalities of the Divine—one Consciousness playing in many personalities, *ekam sat bahudhā*. Even in the human

¹ This and the following two letters are answers to questions regarding some terms used in *The Mother*.

² Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi, Mahasaraswati.

being there are many personalities and not only one, as used formerly to be imagined; for all consciousness can be at once one and multiple. "Powers and Personalities" simply describe different aspects of the same being; a power is not necessarily impersonal and certainly it is not *avyaktam*, as you suggest, —on the contrary, it is a manifestation acting in the worlds of the divine Manifestation.

Emanations of the Mother

Emanations correspond to your description of Matrikas of whom you speak in your letter. An emanation of the Mother is something of her consciousness and power put forth from her which, so long as it is in play, is held in close connection with her and, when its play is no longer required, is withdrawn back into its source, but can always be put out and brought into play once more. But also the detaining thread of connection can be severed or loosened and that which came forth as an emanation can proceed on its way as an independent divine being with its own play in the world. All the Gods can put forth such emanations from their being, identical with them in essence of consciousness and power though

not commensurate. In a certain sense the universe itself can be said to be an emanation from the Supreme. In the consciousness of the sadhak an emanation of the Mother will ordinarily wear the appearance, form and characteristics with which he is familiar.

In a sense the four Powers of the Mother may be called, because of their origin, her Emanations, just as the Gods may be called Emanations of the Divine, but they have a more permanent and fixed character; they are at once independent beings allowed their play by the Adya Shakti and yet portions of the Mother, the Mahashakti, and she can always either manifest through them as separate beings or draw them together as her own various Personalities and hold them in herself, sometimes kept back, sometimes at play, according to her will. In the supramental plane they are always in her and do not act independently but as intimate portions of the Supramental Mahashakti and in close union and harmony with each other.

The Mother and the Gods

These four Powers are the Mother's cosmic God-heads, permanent in the world-play; they stand

among the greater cosmic Godheads to whom allusion is made when it is said that the Mother as the Mahashakti of this triple world "stands there (in the Overmind plane) above the Gods." The Gods, as has already been said, are in origin and essence permanent Emanations of the Divine put forth from the Supreme by the Transcendent Mother, the Adya Shakti; in their cosmic action they are Powers and Personalities of the Divine, each with his independent cosmic standing, function and work in the universe. They are not impersonal entities but cosmic Personalities, although they can and do ordinarily veil themselves behind the movement of impersonal forces. But while in the Overmind and the triple world they appear as independent beings, they return in the Supermind into the One and stand there united in a single harmonious action as multiple personalities of the One Person, the Divine Purushottama.

The Mother's Supramental Power of Love and Ananda

Q: In the "Chandi" the names of the four Cosmic Powers of the Mother—Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi, Mahasaraswati—are mentioned along with others, but the name "Radha" is not mentioned.

This is a clear proof of the fact that when the "Chandi" was composed the Radha-Power was not manifested to the vision of the saints and that the "Chandi" mentions only the Cosmic Powers of the Mother and not her Supramental Powers. In the book "The Mother", after describing the four Powers of the Mother, you have said that: "There are other great Personalities of the Divine Mother, but they were more difficult to bring down and have not stood out in front with so much prominence in the evolution of the earth-spirit. There are among them Presences indispensable for the supramental realisation—most of all one who is her Personality of that mysterious and powerful ecstasy and Ananda which flows from a supreme divine Love, the Ananda that alone can heal the gulf between the highest heights of the supramental spirit and the lowest abysses of Matter, the Ananda that holds the key of a wonderful divinest Life and even now supports from its secrecies the work of all the Powers of the universe." Is not the Personality referred to in this passage the Radha-Power which is spoken of as Premamayi Radha, Mahaprana Shakti and Hladini Shakti?

A: Yes; but the images of the Radha-Krishna lila are taken from the vital world and therefore it is only an inner manifestation of the Radha-Shakti that is there depicted. That is why she is called

Mahaprana Shakti and Hladini Shakti. What is referred to (in the passage quoted) is not this inner form but the full Power of Love and Ananda above.

7-2-1934

The Mother's Powers on All Planes

Q: Does Maheshwari belong to the Intuitive and the Overmind levels?

A: These powers can manifest on all levels from the Overmind to the Physical.

25-8-1933

Durga

Durga is the Mother's power of Protection.

15-4-1933

The Vibhutis of the Mother

(1)

Q: What is the difference in the form of expression or

realisation between the Vibhutis of the Ishwara and the Vibhutis of the Mother?

A: The Mother's Vibhutis would usually be feminine personalities most of whom would be dominated by one of the four personalities of the Mother. The others you mention (Christ, Buddha, Chaitanya, Napoleon, Caesar, etc.) would be personalities and powers of the Ishwara, but in them also, as in all, the Mother's force would act. All creation and transformation is the work of the Mother.

29-10-1935

(2)

Q: Since all creation is her work, can it be taken that it is the personalities of the Mother who, behind the veil, prepare the conditions for the descent of the Avatar or Vibhutis?

A: If you mean the divine Personalities of the Mother—the answer is yes. It may even be said that each Vibhuti draws his energies from the Four, from one of them predominantly in most cases, as Napoleon from Mahakali, Rama from Mahalakshmi, Augustus Caesar from Mahasaraswati.

31-10-1935

The Divine Mother

The Divine Mother is the Consciousness and Force of the Divine—which is the Mother of all things.

Adya Shakti

Adya Shakti is the original Shakti, therefore, the highest form of the Mother. Only she manifests in a different way according to the plane on which one sees her.

22-7-1933

The Transcendent Mother

This is what is termed the Adya Shakti; she is the Supreme Consciousness and Power above the universe and it is by her that all the Gods are manifested, and even the Supramental Ishwara comes into manifestation through her—the Supramental Purushottama of which the Gods are Powers and Personalities.

The Mother and The Ishwara

The Mother is the consciousness and force of the Divine—or, it may be said, she is the Divine in its consciousness-force. The Ishwara as Lord of the cosmos does come out of the Mother who takes her place beside him as the cosmic Shakti—the cosmic Ishwara is one aspect of the Divine.

*The Divine Mother in the Gita, Tantra and
Integral Yoga*

(I)

The Gita does not speak expressly of the Divine Mother; it speaks always of surrender to the Purushottama—it mentions her only as the Para Prakriti who becomes the Jiva, that is, who manifests the Divine in the multiplicity and through whom all these worlds are created by the Supreme and he himself descends as the Avatar. The Gita follows the Vedantic tradition which leans entirely on the Ishwara aspect of the Divine and speaks little of the Divine Mother because its object is to

draw back from world-nature and arrive at the supreme realisation beyond it; the Tantric tradition leans on the Shakti or Ishwari aspect and makes all depend on the Divine Mother because its object is to possess and dominate the world-nature and arrive at the supreme realisation through it. This Yoga insists on both the aspects; the surrender to the Divine Mother is essential for without it there is no fulfilment of the object of the Yoga.

In regard to the Purushottama the Divine Mother is the supreme divine Consciousness and Power above the worlds, Adya Shakti; she carries the Supreme in herself and manifests the Divine in the worlds through the Akshara and Kshara. In regard to the Akshara she is the same Para Shakti holding the Purusha immobile in herself and also herself immobile in him at the back of all creation. In regard to the Kshara she is the mobile cosmic Energy manifesting all beings and forces.

(2)

The experience of the Mother being the Supreme is the Tantric experience—it is one side of the Truth.

The World-Mother

The Ishwari Shakti, divine Conscious-Force and World-Mother, becomes a mediatrix between the eternal One and the manifested Many. On one side, by the play of the energies which she brings from the One, she manifests the multiple Divine in the universe, involving and evolving its endless appearances out of her revealing substance; on the other, by the reascending current of the same energies she leads back all towards That from which they have issued so that the soul in its evolutionary manifestation may more and more return towards the Divinity there or here put on its divine character. There is not in her, although she devises a cosmic mechanism, the character of an inconscient mechanical Executrix which we find in the first physiognomy of Prakriti, the Nature-Force; neither is there that sense of an Unreality, creatrix of illusions, or semi-illusions, which is attached to our first view of Maya. It is at once clear to the experiencing soul that here is a conscious Power of one substance and nature with the Supreme from whom she came. If she seems to have plunged us into the Ignorance and Inconscience in pursuance of a plan we cannot yet interpret, if her forces present themselves as all these ambiguous forces

of the universe, yet it becomes visible before long that she is working for the development of the Divine Consciousness in us and that she stands above drawing us to her own higher entity, revealing to us more and more the very essence of the Divine Knowledge, Will and Ananda. Even in the movements of the Ignorance the soul of the seeker becomes aware of her conscious guidance supporting his steps and leading them slowly or swiftly, straight or by many detours out of the darkness into the light of a greater consciousness, out of mortality into immortality, out of evil and suffering towards a highest good and felicity of which as yet his human mind can form only a faint image. Thus her power is at once liberative and dynamic, creative, effective,—creative not only of things as they are, but of things that are to be; for, eliminating the twisted and tangled movements of his lower consciousness made of the stuff of the ignorance, it rebuilds and new-makes his soul and nature into the substance and forces of a higher divine Nature.¹

The Mother and the Lower Prakriti

It is a mistake to identify the Mother with the

¹ *The Synthesis of Yoga*, pp. 90-92.

lower Prakriti and its mechanism of forces. Prakriti here is a mechanism only which has been put forth for the working of the evolutionary Ignorance. As the ignorant mental, vital or physical being is not itself the Divine, although it comes from the Divine—so the mechanism of Prakriti is not the Divine Mother. No doubt something of her is there in and behind this mechanism maintaining it for the evolutionary purpose; but what she is in herself is not a Shakti of Avidya, but the Divine Consciousness, Power, Light, Para Prakriti to whom we turn for release and the divine fulfilment.

The Cosmic Force of Ignorance and the Divine Mother

There is this much truth that the Cosmic Force works out everything and the Cosmic Spirit (Virat Purusha) supports her action. The Cosmic Force is a Power that works under the conditions of the Ignorance—it appears as the lower nature and the lower nature makes you do wrong things. The Divine allows the play of these forces so long as you do not yourself want anything better. But if you are a sadhak, then you do not accept the play of the lower nature, you turn to the Divine Mother instead,

and ask her to work through you instead of the lower nature. It is only when you have turned entirely in every part of your being to the Divine Mother and to her alone that the Divine will do all actions through you.

Saguna and Nirguna Ishwara and the Mother

Nirguna, Saguna are only aspects taken by the Divine in the manifestation. It is the Mother who manifests (creation is only manifestation) the Saguna or the Nirguna Ishwara.

28-6-1933

The Silent Atman, the Dynamic Self and the Mother

(I)

The experiences were all right—but they give only one side of the Divine Truth, that which one attains through the higher mind—the other side is what one attains through the heart. Above the higher mind these two truths become one. If one realises the silent Atman above, there is no danger, but there

is also no transformation, only Moksha, Nirvana. If one realises the cosmic self, dynamic and active, then one realises all as the Self, all as myself, that self as the Divine, etc. This is all true; but the danger is of the ego catching hold of "my" in that conception of "all is myself". For this "myself" is not my personal self but everybody's self as well as mine. The way to get rid of any such danger is to remember that this Divine is also the Mother, that the personal "I" is a child of the Mother with whom I am one, yet different, her child, servant, instrument. I have said that you should not stop realising the Self as the cosmic consciousness, but should at the same time remember that all this is the Mother.

(2)

It is possible to go towards the knowledge by beginning with the experience of dissolution in the One, but on condition that you do not stop there, taking it as the highest Truth, but proceed to realise the same One as the Supreme Mother, the Consciousness-Force of the Eternal. If, on the other hand, you approach through the Supreme Mother, she will give you the liberation in the silent One also

as well as the realisation of the dynamic One, and from that it is easier to arrive at the Truth in which both are one and inseparable. At the same time, the gulf created by the mind between the Supreme and his manifestation is bridged, and there is no longer a fissure in the truth which makes all incomprehensible.

(3)

It is the Divine who is the Master—the Self is inactive, it is always a silent witness supporting all things—that is the static aspect. There is also the dynamic aspect through which the Divine works—behind that is the Mother. You must not lose sight of that, that it is through the Mother that all things are attained.

1-9-1933

Chit Shakti, Jivatma, Soul and Ego

Chit Shakti or Bhagavat Chetana is the Mother—the Jivatma is a portion of it, the psychic or soul

a spark of it. Ego is a perverse reflection of the psychic or the Jivatma. If that is what you mean, it is correct.

The Soul and the Divine Mother

It is true of every soul on earth that it is a portion of the Divine Mother passing through the experiences of the Ignorance in order to arrive at the truth of its being and be the instrument of a Divine Manifestation and work here.

•

III

LIGHTS AND VISIONS OF THE MOTHER

The Mother's Lights

All the lights are put out by the Mother from herself.

Different Forms of Light

Light is a general term. Light is not knowledge but the illumination that comes from above and liberates the being from obscurity and darkness.

But this Light also assumes different forms such as the white light of the Mother, the pale blue light of Sri Aurobindo, the golden light of the Truth, the psychic light (pink and rose), etc.

13-10-1934

The Mother's White Light

(1)

The lights are the Mother's Powers—many in number. The white light is her own characteristic power, that of the Divine Consciousness in its essence.

15-7-1934

(2)

The white light is the Mother's light and it is always around her.

22-8-1933

(3)

The pale blue light is my light—white light is the Mother's (sometimes gold also). People generally see either the white or both the white and the pale blue around her.

4-9-1933

(4)

The white light is the Mother's light. Wherever it descends or enters, it brings peace, purity, silence and the openness to the higher forces. If it comes below the navel, that means that it is working in the lower vital.

31-7-1934

(5)

The important experience is that of the white ray in the heart—for that is a ray of Mother's light, the white light, and the illumining of the heart by the light is a thing of great power in this sadhana. The intuitions she speaks of are a sign of the inner consciousness growing in her—the consciousness which is necessary for Yoga.

28-7-1937

(6)

It (the Mother's light) is always there in the inner Purusha.

(7)

That means the light of the divine consciousness (the Mother's Consciousness, white light) in the vital. Blue is the higher mind, gold the divine Truth. So it is the vital with the light of the higher mind and the divine Truth in it emanating the Mother's light.

(8)

What you saw in vision was a supraphysical body of the Mother made probably of her white light which is the light of the Divine Consciousness and Force that stands behind the Universe.

30-I-1935

(9)

Q: Today as soon as the Mother took her seat in the Pranam Hall I saw that white light was playing both on her left and right sides. Was there any particular reason why I saw like this?

A: No. One can always see white light around the Mother, for it is her light, always there.

8-8-1933

(10)

Q: Today while meditating in the Pranam Hall I saw in vision a range of mountains from which white light was coming out. What does this signify? To which plane does this dream belong?

A: Mental. The mountain is the symbol of the ascent from the lower to the higher. The white light is the Mother's light, the light of the Divine Consciousness descending from the heights.

7-8-1933

The White Water-Lily

It (the white water-lily) is the Mother's flower, the flower of divine consciousness.

15-4-1933

The Mother's Diamond Light

(1)

(a) It (the diamond light) means the essential Force of the Mother.

(b) The diamond light proceeds from the heart of the Divine Consciousness and it brings the opening of the Divine Consciousness wherever it goes.

(c) The Mother's descent with the diamond light is the sanction of the Supreme Power to the movement in you.

(d) The Mother's diamond light is a light of absolute purity and power.

(e) The diamond light is the central consciousness and force of the Divine.

(2)

The diamond is the symbol of the Mother's light and energy—the diamond light is that of her consciousness at its most intense.

The Golden Light of the Mother's Mahakali Form

(1)

The Mother's light is white—especially diamond white. The Mahakali form is usually golden, of a very bright and strong golden hue.

12-10-1935

(2)

The golden light is the light of the Divine Truth on the higher planes above the ordinary mind—a light supramental in origin. It is also the light of Mahakali above the mind. The golden light is also often seen emanating from the Mother like the white light.

17-9-1933

(3)

Q: I have heard that the colour of Kali is black and she has four hands. But I saw her in my vision with only two hands and her colour was bright white. Why did I see her like this?

A: The black Kali form is a manifestation on the vital plane of Mahakali—but Mahakali herself in the Overmind is golden. What you saw was the Mother herself in her body of light with the Mahakali power in her, but not the actual form of Mahakali.

26-9-1933

(4)

This Kali, Shyama, etc. — are ordinary forms seen through the vital; the real Mahakali form whose origin is in the Overmind is not black or dark or terrible but golden of colour and full of beauty, even when formidable to the Asuras.

10-2-1934

Working of the Golden and Diamond Lights

The line of golden light is a line of the light of the higher Divine Truth encircling the Akash of the heart and the diamond mass is the Mother's light

pouring into that Akash. It is therefore a sign of these powers working on the psychic-emotional centre.

17-12-1936

Some Visions and Experiences of the Mother

(1)

Q: Yesterday when the Mother came down in the evening to give darshan, I saw her face shining with crimson light like the sun in the early morning. What is the meaning of crimson light?

A: Crimson light indicates the manifestation of love in the material atmosphere.

5-6-1933

(2)

Q: Today while meditating in the Pranam Hall before the Mother came down, I saw in vision that from a high place the Mother was descending wearing

a rosy-coloured sari and having a "Divine Love" flower in her hair. What is the significance of this?

A: It is a symbol of the descent of Divine Love.

5-6-1933

(3)

Q: Two days back I saw in a dream that I was lying in a bed in a room and the Mother entered with a rosy-coloured horse. Seeing the horse I told the Mother that he will bite me but the Mother replied that he will not do so. What is the meaning of this dream?

A: Rose is the colour of psychic love—the horse is dynamic power. So the rosy-coloured horse means that the Mother was bringing with her the dynamic power of psychic love.

3-8-1933

(4)

Q: Today while meditating in the Pranam Hall I saw that from a sky filled with blue light a beautifully-

paved path was coming down on earth and the Mother was slowly descending on this path. The Mother's entire body was of white and golden light which was spreading out on all sides. When the Mother reached the end of the path and came down on earth her body got mixed with the earth. Then I suddenly woke up from meditation. Was this a vision? What does it signify?

A: Yes, it is a vision from the plane of mind (not ordinary, but higher mind). It indicates the descent of the Mother with the light of purity and Truth (white and golden) into Matter.

5-8-1933

(5)

Q: Two days back I saw in a dream that the Mother was standing on a high place and before her there was a pillar with the Tulsi plant on it. What does it signify?

A: That she has brought down and planted bhakti, I suppose.

5-6-1933

(6)

Serpents are energies—those of the vital are usually evil forces and it is these that are usually seen by people. But favourable or divine forces are also imaged in that form, e.g., the Kundalini Shakti is imaged in the form of a serpent. Serpents turning over or round the Mother's head would rather recall the Shivamurti and would mean numberless energies all finally gathered up into one infinite energy of which they are the aspects.

28-10-1936

(7)

Q: I had a dream in which I saw that the Mother was near me. Once when she smiled, I felt as if I saw all the worlds in her mouth, as Jasoda saw them in Krishna's mouth. Immediately after seeing this, I felt myself lifted up above the world and looking at it as a free witness. Was this a real dream-experience and did I really see the Mother, or was it some other influence?

A: I don't think it was another influence. It reads like a very genuine experience.

19-6-1935

(8)

Q: While looking at the Mother when she came on the terrace, I suddenly saw in her lap a baby whom I took to be Jesus Christ as it resembled his figure. The vision lasted for about a minute and I saw it with open eyes. Could it be true?

A: It may be so—as Jesus was the child of the Divine Mother.

25-II-1933

(9)

You seem to have ascended into a plane of the Higher spiritualised Mind with a descent into it of Maheshwari bringing the power of the Divine Truth. The result in the physical consciousness was a perception of the One Consciousness and Life in all things and an illumination of the cells of the body with golden light of the higher Truth.

October, 1933

(10)

Q: Last night I saw in a dream that from the Mother's

body light was coming into my body and transforming it. Both the bodies were longer than the physical bodies and were of a shadowy colour like that of stones. What does this signify?

A: Good, it is the opening of the physical consciousness to the Mother. It was probably the sub-conscious physical that you saw—that would explain the shadowy character—the stone indicates the material Nature.

30-9-1933

(II)

Q: Recently I notice that before the Mother comes down from the terrace in the evening she stands there for a long time. I feel that at that time she gives us something specially, so I concentrate to receive and feel what she gives. But this evening suddenly I saw (when I was concentrating by looking at her) that her physical body disappeared,—there was no sign of her body, as if she were not there. Then after a few seconds her figure reappeared. I felt at that moment that she mixed with the ether and became one with all things. Why did I see like this?

A: The Mother makes an invocation or aspiration and stands till the movement is over. Yesterday she passed for sometime beyond the sense of the body and it is perhaps this that made you see in that way.

29-8-1932

(12)

Q: Today while meditating in the Pranam Hall I saw in vision that the Mother was absorbed in deep concentration. Why did I see her like that?

A: The Mother is always in a concentrated consciousness in her inner being—so it is quite natural that you should see like that.

5-6-1933

(13)

Q: This evening when the Mother came to give darshan, I saw Sri Aurobindo's light around her like a cloud. Was this a vision of a real fact or only a mental or vital formation as in a dream?

A: If seeing the Mother's light is a mistake or a mental or vital formation, then the realisation of the Divine and all spiritual experience can be questioned as a mental or vital formation or a mistake and all Yoga becomes impossible.

6-9-1933

The Mother's Aura

What people see around the Mother is first her aura, as it is called nowadays and, secondly, the forces of Light that pour out from her when she concentrates, as she always does on the roof for instance. (Everybody has an aura—but in most it is weak and not very luminous; in the Mother's aura there is the full play of lights and powers.) People do not see it usually because it is a subtle physical and not a gross material phenomenon. They can see only in two conditions, first if they develop sufficient subtle sight, secondly if the aura itself begins to become so strong that it affects the sheath of gross Matter which conceals it. The Mother has certainly no idea of making people see it—it is of themselves that one after another, some 20 or 30 in the Ashram, I believe, have come to see. It is certainly one of the signs that the Higher Force

(call it supramental or not) is beginning to influence Matter.

15-11-1933

Direct Inner Perception of the Mother

I don't believe X or anybody would have the vision of the Mother's full divinity at first view. That can only come if one has already developed the faculty of vision in the occult planes. What is of more importance is the clear perception or intimate inner feeling or direct sense: "This is She". I think you are inclined to be too romantic and poetic and too little spiritually realistic in these things. With many people the faculty of this kind of occult vision is the first to develop when they begin sadhana and with others it is there naturally or comes on occasions without any practice of Yoga. But with people who live mainly in the intellect (a few excepted) this faculty is not usually there by nature and most have much difficulty in developing it. It was so even with me. It would be something of a miracle to see things without the faculty of seeing. We don't deal much in miracles of that kind.

August, 1935

Significance of the Mother's Symbol

Q: I have been frequently thinking of the Mother's symbol of "Chakra" and its significance. I have understood it as follows:

Central circle—Transcendental power.

Four inner petals—Four powers working from the Supermind to Overmind.

Twelve outer petals—Division of four into twelve powers from Overmind to Intuition and mind.

Do you think I have understood the significance correctly?

A: Essentially (in general principle) the 12 powers are the vibrations that are necessary for the manifestation. These are the 12 seen from the beginning above the Mother's head. Thus there are really 12 rays from the sun not 7, 12 planets etc.

As to the exact interpretation of the detail of the powers, I see nothing against the arrangement you have made. It can stand very well.

15-4-1934

IV

OPENING AND SURRENDER TO THE MOTHER

Revelation of the Mother's Coming

(1)

I don't know on which plane X is, but his method is that of Adwaita Knowledge and Moksha—so there is no necessity for him to recognise the arrival of the Divine. Y's Guru was a bhakta of the Divine Mother, believed in the dynamic side of existence, so it was quite natural for him to have the revelation of the coming of the Mother.

23-1-1936

(2)

In Mother's childhood's visions she saw myself whom she knew as "Krishna"—she did not see Ramakrishna.

It was not necessary that he (Ramakrishna) should have a vision of her coming down as he was not thinking of the future nor consciously preparing for it. I don't think he had the idea of any incarnation of the Mother.

11-7-1935

Recognition of the Mother's Divinity

(I)

There are people who start at once, others take time.

X recognised the Mother as divine at first sight and has been happy ever afterwards; others who rank among Mother's devotees took years to discover or admit it, but they arrived all the same. There are people who had nothing but difficulties and revolts for the first five, six, seven or more years of the sadhana, yet the psychic ended by awaking. The time taken is a secondary matter: the one thing needful is—soon or late, easily or with difficulty, to get there.

(2)

Q: It seems that part of my external being which was not accepting the Mother is now recognising her divinity. But why do I forget it when I physically come before her?

A: It is the physical mind in its most external action that sees physical things as only physical.

15-8-1937

(3)

This struggle in you (between bhakti for Sri Krishna and the sense of the divinity of the Mother) is quite unnecessary; for the two things are one and go perfectly together. It is he who has brought you to the Mother and it is by adoration of her that you will realise him. He is here in the Ashram and it is his work that is being done here.

1933

(4)

Q: Even a good devotee and a brilliant student like X finds it difficult to accept the Mother. I cannot

understand why he cannot see the simple truth about her.

A: If he finds it difficult to accept Mother, how is he a good devotee? A devotee to whom? A brilliant student is another matter; one can be a brilliant student and yet quite incompetent in spiritual matters. If one is a devotee of Vishnu or some other Godhead, then it is different—one may see only one's object of worship and so not be able to accept anything else.

14-11-1934

(5)

Q: Some people seem to be quite misled in understanding the Mother's status with regard to the higher planes. When they are in these planes or receive something from them, they begin to think that they have reached a great height, and that the higher planes have nothing to do with the Mother. Especially about the Supermind they have such queer notions—that it is something greater than the Mother.

A: If they have a greater experience or consciousness than the Mother, they should not stay here but go and save the world with it.

The Central Secret of Sadhana

(1)

By remaining psychically open to the Mother, all that is necessary for work or sadhana develops progressively, that is one of the chief secrets, the central secret of the sadhana.

13-2-1933

(2)

But it is not by *Upadesh* that this sadhana is given or carried on. It is only those who are capable by aspiration and meditation on the Mother to open and receive her action and working within that can succeed in this Yoga.

21-6-1937

(3)

It is a mistake to exercise the mind about these things and try to arrange them with the ordinary mind. It is by confidence in the Mother that the opening needed will come when your consciousness is ready. There is no harm in arranging your

present work so that there will be time and energy for some meditation, but it is not by meditation alone that what is needed will come. It is by faith and openness to the Mother.

9-10-1934

(4)

You have only to aspire, to keep yourself open to the Mother, to reject all that is contrary to her will and to let her work in you—doing also all your work for her and in the faith that it is through her force that you can do it. If you remain open in this way, the knowledge and realisation will come to you in due course.

(5)

To practise Yoga implies the will to overcome all attachments and turn to the Divine alone. The principal thing in the Yoga is to trust in the Divine Grace at every step, to direct the thought continually to the Divine and to offer oneself till the being opens and the Mother's force can be felt working in the Adhara.

Openness to the Mother

(1)

To be open is simply to be so turned to the Mother that her Force can work in you without anything refusing or obstructing her action. If the mind is shut up in its own ideas and refuses to allow her to bring in the Light and the Truth, if the vital clings to its desires and does not admit the true initiative and impulsions that the Mother's power brings, if the physical is shut up in its desires, habits and inertia and does not allow the Light and Force to enter in it and work, then one is not open. It is not possible to be entirely open all at once in all the movements, but there must be a central opening in each part and a dominant aspiration or will in each part (not in the mind alone) to admit only the Mother's 'workings', the rest will then be progressively done.

28-10-1934

(2)

To remain open to the Mother is to remain always quiet and happy and confident—not restless, not

grieving or despondent, to let her force work in you, guide you, give you knowledge, give you peace and Ananda. If you cannot keep yourself open, then, aspire constantly but quietly that you may be open.

Right Way of Opening

(1)

Q: What is the meaning of opening?

A: It is the receptivity to the Mother's presence and her forces.

April, 1933

(2)

Q: What is the right and perfect way to get this opening?

A: Aspiration, quietude, widening of oneself to receive, rejection of all that tries to shut you to the Divine.

April, 1933

(3)

Q: How to know that I am opening to the Mother and not to other forces?

A: You have to be vigilant and see that there is no movement of disturbance, desire, ego.

April, 1933

(4)

Q: What are the indications of a real opening to the Mother?

A: That shows itself at once—when you feel the divine peace, equality, wideness, light, Ananda, Knowledge, strength, when you are aware of the Mother's nearness or presence or the working of her Force, etc., etc. If any of these things are felt, it is the opening—the more are felt, the more complete the opening.

April, 1933

The Condition for Progress

Q: If a sadhak even after a long time cannot fully

open himself to the Mother owing to obstacles in his nature, does it mean that he will not be accepted by the Mother?

A: There is no meaning in such a question. Those who follow the Yoga here are accepted by the Mother—for “accepted” means “admitted into the Yoga, accepted as disciples”. But the progress in the Yoga and the siddhi in the Yoga depend on the degree to which there is the opening.

24-6-1933

Opening and Transformation

Q: X says that the Mother told him that if the sincerity is perfect there would be transformation in a day. I do not understand how that could be possible—a long process of change and conversion compressed in a single day!

A: By sincerity Mother meant being open to no influence but the Divine's only. Now, if the whole being is sincere in that sense even to every cell of the body, what could prevent the most rapid trans-

formation? People cannot be like that, however much the enlightened part of them may want to, because of the nature of the Ignorance out of which the ordinary *prakriti* has been built—hence the necessity of a long and laborious working.

26-7-1934

Progressive Opening

Openness is not always complete from the first—a part of the being opens, other parts of the consciousness remain still closed or half open only—one has to aspire till all is open. Even with the best and most powerful sadhaks the full opening takes time; nor is there anyone who has been able to abandon everything at once without any struggle. There is no reason to feel therefore that if you call you will not be heard—the Mother knows the difficulties of human nature and will help you through. Persevere always, call always and then after each difficulty there will be a progress.

20-4-1935

The Inner and the Higher Opening

(1)

It is by the constant remembrance that the being is prepared for the full opening. By the opening of the heart the Mother's presence begins to be felt and, by the opening to her Power above, the Force of the higher consciousness comes down into the body and works there to change the whole nature.

7-8-1934

(2)

As a rule the only mantra used in this sadhana is that of the Mother or of my name and the Mother's. The concentration in the heart and the concentration in the head can both be used—each has its own result. The first opens up the psychic being and brings bhakti, love and union with the Mother, her presence within the heart and the action of her Force in the nature. The other opens the mind to self-realisation, to the consciousness of what is above mind, to the ascent of the consciousness out of the body and the descent of the higher consciousness into the body.

13-10-1934

(3)

There is no method in this Yoga except to concentrate, preferably in the heart, and call the presence and power of the Mother to take up the being and by the workings of her force transform the consciousness; one can concentrate also in the head or between the eyebrows, but for many this is a too difficult opening. When the mind falls quiet and the concentration becomes strong and the aspiration intense, then there is a beginning of experience. The more the faith, the more rapid the result is likely to be. For the rest one must not depend on one's own efforts only, but succeed in establishing a contact with the Divine and a receptivity to the Mother's Power and Presence.

(4)

The direct opening of the psychic centre is easy only when the ego-centricity is greatly diminished and also if there is a strong bhakti for the Mother. A spiritual humility and sense of submission and dependence is necessary.

16-7-1936

(5)

Yes, it is by quieting the mind that you will become able to call the Mother and open to her. The soothing effect was a touch from the psychic—one of the touches that prepare the opening of the psychic with its gift of inner peace, love and joy.

17-9-1934

(6)

The Mother's peace is above you—by aspiration and quiet self-opening it descends. When it takes hold of the vital and the body, then equanimity becomes easy and in the end automatic.

28-8-1933

*Openness to the Mother's Force and
Avoidance of Other Forces*

(1)

Keep yourself open to the Mother's Force, but do not trust all forces. As you go on, if you keep

straight, you will come to a time when the psychic becomes more predominantly active and the Light from above prevails more purely and strongly so that the chance of mental constructions and vital formations mixing with the true experience diminishes. As I have told you, these are not and cannot be the supramental Forces; it is a work of preparation which is only making things ready for a future Yoga-siddhi.

18-9-1932

(2)

Let the power of the Mother work in you, but be careful to avoid any mixture or substitution, in its place, of either a magnified ego-working or a force of Ignorance presenting itself as Truth. Aspire especially for the elimination of all obscurity and unconsciousness in the nature.

Loyalty and Fidelity to the Mother

If an adverse Force comes, one has not to accept and welcome its suggestions, but to turn to the

Mother and to refuse to turn away from her. Whether one can open or not, one has to be loyal and faithful. Loyalty and fidelity are not qualities for which one has to do Yoga. They are very simple things which any man or woman who aspires to the Truth ought to be able to accomplish.

The Only Way to Succeed

(I)

There is in a very fundamental part of your nature a strong formation of ego-individuality which has mixed in your spiritual aspiration a clinging element of pride and spiritual ambition. This formation has never consented to be broken up in order to give place to something more true and divine. Therefore, when the Mother has put her force upon you, or when you yourself have pulled the force upon you, this in you has always prevented it from doing its work in its own way. It has begun itself building according to the ideas of the mind or some demand of the ego, trying to make its own creation in its "own way", by its own strength, its own sadhana, its own tapasya. There has never

been here any real surrender, any giving up of yourself freely and simply into the hands of the Divine Mother. And yet that is the only way to succeed in the supramental Yoga. To be a Yogi, a Sannyasi, a Tapaswi is not the object here. The object is transformation, and the transformation can only be done by a force infinitely greater than your own; it can only be done by being truly like a child in the hands of the Divine Mother.

(2)

If there is a refusal of the psychic new birth, a refusal to become the child new-born from the Mother, owing to attachment to intellectual knowledge or mental ideas or to some vital desire, then there will be a failure in the sadhana.

(3)

Q: In our sadhana, at times we experience large descents of Peace, Force, Ananda, etc. which are usurped by our little human ego to make us feel that we shall belong to the Mother's select band of Supermen. Is this not a mistake?

A: To want to be a Superman is a mistake. It only swells the ego. One can aspire for the Divine to bring about the supramental transformation, but that also should not be done till the being has become psychic and spiritualised by the descent of the Mother's peace, force, light and purity.

22-2-1936

(4)

Q: What poise or mode we should keep for the supramental descent?

A: As for poise or mode—that you need not trouble yourself about. An entire faith, opening, self-giving to the Mother are the one condition necessary throughout.

23-9-1935

Receiving the Mother's Grace

(1)

Q: Is the Mother's Grace only general?

A: Both general and special.

8-2-1934

(2)

Q: How to receive what she grants in general?

A: You have only to keep yourself open and whatever you need and can receive at the moment will come.

10-2-1934

(3)

Q: Is it the Purusha who consents to the action of the Mother's Grace in the whole being?

A: Yes.

April, 1933

(4)

Q: If the Purusha does not give consent, does it mean that the other beings also cannot come to the front to enable the sadhak to receive the Mother's Grace?

A: No. The Purusha often holds back and lets the other beings consent or reject in his place.

April, 1933

(5)

Q: When the Mother's Grace comes down to the sadhak, is it by the consent of the Purusha?

A: What do you mean "by the consent"? The Mother's Grace comes down by the Mother's will. The Purusha can accept or reject the Grace.

April, 1933

Necessity of Surrender to the Mother

(1)

There is not much spiritual meaning in keeping open to the Mother if you withhold your surrender. Self-giving or surrender is demanded of those who practise this Yoga, because without such a progressive surrender of the being it is quite impossible to get anywhere near the goal. To keep open means to call in her Force to work in you, and if you do not surrender to it, it amounts to not allowing the Force to work in you at all or else only on condition that it will work in the way you want and not in its own way which is the way of the Divine Truth. A suggestion of this kind is usually made by some

adverse Power or by some egoistic element of mind or vital which wants the Grace or the Force, but only in order to use it for its own purpose, and is not willing to live for the Divine Purpose,—it is willing to take from the Divine all it can get, but not to give itself to the Divine. The soul, the true being, on the contrary, turns towards the Divine and is not only willing but eager and happy to surrender.

In this Yoga one is supposed to go beyond every mental idealistic culture. Ideas and Ideals belong to the mind and are half-truths only; the mind too is, more often than not, satisfied with merely having an ideal, with the pleasure of idealising, while life remains always the same, untransformed or changed only a little and mostly in appearance. The spiritual seeker does not turn aside from the pursuit of realisation to mere idealising; not to idealise, but to realise the Divine Truth is always his aim, either beyond or in life also—and in the latter case it is necessary to transform mind and life which cannot be done without surrender to the action of the Divine Force, the Mother.

To seek after the Impersonal is the way of those who want to withdraw from life, but usually they try by their own effort, and not by an opening of themselves to a superior Power or by the way of surrender; for the Impersonal is not something

that guides or helps, but something to be attained and it leaves each man to attain it according to the way and capacity of his nature. On the other hand, by an opening and surrender to the Mother one can realise the Impersonal and every other aspect of Truth also.

The surrender must necessarily be progressive. No one can make the complete surrender from the beginning, so it is quite natural that when one looks into oneself, one should find its absence. That is no reason why the principle of surrender should not be accepted and carried out steadily from stage to stage, from field to field, applying it successively to all the parts of the nature.

(2)

It is then a *samkalpa* of surrender. But the surrender must be to the Mother—not even to the Force, but to the Mother herself.

4-10-1936

(3)

If the psychic manifests, it will not ask you to surrender to it, but to surrender to the Mother.

(4)

The best way is to live in the psychic being, for that is always surrendered to the Mother and can lead the others in the right way. For control one has to centralise somewhere—some do it in the mind or above the mind, others do it in the heart and through the heart in the psychic centre.

11-6-1933

The Necessary Effort

The effort demanded of the sadhak is that of aspiration, rejection and surrender. If these three are done the rest is to come of itself by the Grace of the Mother and the working of her force in you. But of the three the most important is surrender of which the first necessary form is trust and confidence and patience in difficulty. There is no rule that trust and confidence can only remain if aspiration is there. On the contrary, when even aspiration is not there because of the pressure of inertia, trust and con-

fidence and patience can remain. If trust and patience fail when aspiration is quiescent, that would mean that the sadhak is relying solely on his own effort—it would mean, “Oh, my aspiration has failed, so there is no hope for me. My aspiration fails, so what can Mother do?” On the contrary, the sadhak should feel, “Never mind, my aspiration will come back again. Meanwhile I know that the Mother is with me even when I do not feel her; she will carry me even through the darkest period.” That is the fully right attitude you must have. To those who have it depression can do nothing; even if it comes it has to return baffled. That is not tamasic surrender. Tamasic surrender is when one says, “I won’t do anything; let Mother do everything. Aspiration, rejection, surrender even are not necessary. Let her do all that in me.” There is a great difference between the two attitudes. One is that of the shirker who won’t do anything, the other is that of the sadhak who does his best, but when he is reduced to quiescence for a time and things are adverse, keeps always his trust in the Mother’s force and presence behind all and by that trust baffles the opposition force and calls back the activity of the sadhana.

26-10-1936

32

Real and Complete Submission

It is necessary if you want to progress in your sadhana that you should make the submission and surrender of which you speak sincere, real and complete. This cannot be as long as you mix up your desires with your spiritual aspiration. It cannot be as long as you cherish vital attachment to family, child or anything or anybody else. If you are to do this Yoga, you must have only one desire and aspiration, to receive the spiritual Truth and manifest it in all your thoughts, feelings, actions and nature. You must not hunger after any relations with anyone. The relations of the sadhak with others must be created for him from within, when he has the true consciousness and lives in the Light. They will be determined within him by the power and will of the Divine Mother according to the supramental Truth for the divine life and divine work; they must not be determined by his mind and his vital desires. This is the thing you have to remember. Your psychic being is capable of giving itself to the Mother and living and growing in the Truth; but your lower vital being has been full of attachments and *saṁskāras* and an impure movement of desire and your external physical mind was not able to shake off its ignorant ideas and habits

and open to the Truth. That was the reason why you were unable to progress, because you were keeping up an element and movements which could not be allowed to remain; for they were the exact opposite of what has to be established in a divine life. The Mother can only free you from these things, if you really want it, not only in your psychic being, but in your physical mind and all your vital nature. The sign will be that you no longer cherish or insist on your personal notions, attachments or desires, and that whatever the distance and wherever you may be, you will feel yourself open and the power and presence of the Mother with you and working in you and will be contented, quiet, confident, wanting nothing else, awaiting always the Mother's Will.

(2)

Put all before the Mother in your heart so that her Light may work on it for the best.

21-4-1935

(3)

The life of *samsāra* is in its nature a field of

unrest—to go through it in the right way one has to offer one's life and actions to the Divine and pray for the peace of the Divine within. When the mind becomes quiet, one can feel the Divine Mother supporting the life and put everything into her hands.

16-4-1933

In the Mother's Lap

Q: I find it very difficult to do the right kind of concentration. Since I can't concentrate properly, would it not be best for me to imagine myself lying eternally in the Mother's lap?

A: This is the best possible kind of concentration.

12-8-1935

V

WORKING OF THE MOTHER'S FORCE

The Mother's Force

(1)

Nothing can be done except through the force of the Mother.

(2)

All has to be done by the working of the Mother's force aided by your aspiration, devotion and surrender.

30-10-1934

The Force of Prakriti and the Mother's Force

When I speak of the Mother's force I do not speak of the force of Prakriti which carries in it

things of the Ignorance but of the higher Force of the Divine that descends from above to transform the nature.

No, there was no intention on the Mother's part. It is yourself who by coming to Mother became aware of your mistake.

Descent and Working of the Mother's Higher Force

(I)

There is a force which accompanies the growth of the new consciousness and at once grows with it and helps it to come about and to perfect itself. This force is the Yoga-Shakti. It is here coiled up and asleep in all the centres of our inner being (Chakras) and is at the base what is called in the Tantras the Kundalini Shakti. But it is also above us, above our head as the Divine Force—not there coiled up, involved, asleep, but awake, scient, potent, extended and wide; it is there waiting for manifestation and to this Force we have to open ourselves—to the power of the Mother. In the mind it manifests itself as a divine mind-force or a universal mind-force and it can do everything that the personal mind

cannot do; it is then the Yogic mind-force. When it manifests and acts in the vital or physical in the same way, it is there apparent as a Yogic life-force or a Yogic body-force. It can awake in all these forms, bursting outward and upwards, extending itself into wideness from below; or it can descend and become there a definite power for things; it can pour downwards into the body, working, establishing its reign, extending into wideness from above, link the lowest in us with the highest above us, release the individual into a cosmic universality or into absoluteness and transcendence.

(2)

Certainly, in a sense the descent of the higher powers is the Divine Mother's own descent—for it is she who comes down in them.

(3)

When the Peace is established, this higher or Divine Force from above can descend and work in us. It descends usually first into the head and liberates the inner mind centres, then into the

heart centre and liberates fully the psychic and emotional being, then into the navel and other vital centres and liberates the inner vital, then into the Muladhara and below and liberates the inner physical being. It works at the same time for perfection as well as liberation; it takes up the whole nature part by part and deals with it, rejecting what has to be rejected, sublimating what has to be sublimated, creating what has to be created. It integrates, harmonises, establishes a new rhythm in the nature. It can bring down too a higher and yet higher force and range of the higher nature until, if that be the aim of the sadhana, it becomes possible to bring down the supramental force and existence. All this is prepared, assisted, farthered by the work of the psychic being in the heart centre; the more it is open, in front, active, the quicker, safer, easier the working of the Force can be. The more love and bhakti and surrender grow in the heart, the more rapid and perfect becomes the evolution of the sadhana. For the descent and transformation imply at the same time an increasing contact and union with the Divine.

That is the fundamental rationale of the sadhana. It will be evident that the two most important things here are the opening of the heart centre and the opening of the mind centres to all that is behind

and above them. For the heart opens to the psychic being and the mind centres open to the higher consciousness and the nexus between the psychic being and the higher consciousness is the principal means of the siddhi. The first opening is effected by a concentration in the heart, a call to the Divine to manifest within us and through the psychic to take up and lead the whole nature. Aspiration, prayer, bhakti, love, surrender are the main supports of this part of the sadhana—accompanied by a rejection of all that stands in the way of what we aspire for. The second opening is effected by a concentration of the consciousness in the head (afterwards, above it) and an aspiration and call and a sustained will for the descent of the divine Peace, Power, Light, Knowledge, Ananda into the being—the Peace first or the Peace and Force together. Some indeed receive Light first or Ananda first or some sudden pouring down of knowledge. With some there is first an opening which reveals to them a vast infinite Silence, Force, Light or Bliss above them and afterwards either they ascend to that or these things begin to descend into the lower nature. With others there is either the descent, first into the head, then down to the heart level, then to the navel and below and through the whole body, or else an inexplicable opening—without any sense of

descent—of peace, light, wideness or power, or else a horizontal opening into the cosmic consciousness or in a suddenly widened mind an outburst of knowledge. Whatever comes has to be welcomed—for there is no absolute rule for all—but if the peace has not come first, care must be taken not to swell oneself in exultation or lose the balance. The capital movement however is when the Divine Force or Shakti, the power of the Mother comes down and takes hold, for then the organisation of the consciousness begins and the larger foundation of the Yoga.

(4)

What you feel streaming down must be the Mother's overhead Force. It flows usually from above the head and works at first in the mind-centres (head and neck) and afterwards goes down into the chest and heart and then through the movement of the whole body.

It is the effect of this working which you must be feeling in the head up to the shoulders. The Force that comes down from above is the one that works to transform the consciousness into that of a higher spiritual being. Before that the Mother's Force works

in the psychic, mental, vital and the physical plane itself to support, purify and psychically change the consciousness.

(5)

The feeling of the vibration of the Mother's force around the head is more than a mental idea or even a mental realisation, it is an experience. This vibration is indeed the action of the Mother's force which is first felt above the head or around it, then afterwards within the head. The pressure means that it is working to open the mind and its centres so that it may enter. The mind-centres are in the head, one at the top and above it, another between the eyes, a third in the throat. That is why you feel the vibration around the head and sometimes up to the neck, but not below. It is so usually, for it is only after enveloping and entering the mind that it goes below to the emotional and vital parts (heart, navel, etc.)—though sometimes it is more enveloping before it enters the body.

(6)

This is the meaning of your experiences:

(1) The power of the Divine Mother from above is descending upon you and the pressure you feel on your head and the workings of which you are aware are hers.

Put yourself completely into her hands, have entire confidence, observe carefully and accurately all that happens and write that here. There is no need of special instructions since what is needed is being done for you.

(2) The first pressure was on your mind. The centres of the mind are: (a) the head and above it, (b) the centre of the forehead between the eyes, (c) the throat and the vital-mental (emotional) and sensational mind-centres from the breast downward. It is this latter which is the first *prāṇa* of which you became aware. The action of the Power was to widen these two parts of you and raise them up towards the lowest centre of the higher consciousness above your head, so that hereafter they might both be consciously governed from there and that these might both move in a wide universal consciousness not limited by the body.

(3) The other *prāṇa*, the restless one of which you became aware is the vital being, the being of

desire and life-movement. The work of the Power has been directed towards quieting the restless movements and making it wide in consciousness as with the mind. The large body you felt was the vital body, not the physical, *sthūla śarīra*.

(4) The basis of your sadhana must be silence and quiet.

You must remain and grow always more and more deeply quiet and still both in yourself and in your attitude to the world around you. If you can do this, the sadhana is likely to go on progressing and enlarging itself with a minimum of trouble and disturbance.

Go on quietly trusting to the Power that is at work in you.

(7)

This weight or pressure on the head is always the sign that the Mother's Force is in contact with you and pressing from above to envelop your being and enter the Adhar and pervade it;—usually passing by degrees through the centres on its way downward. Sometimes it comes first as Peace, sometimes as Force, sometimes as the Mother's consciousness and her presence, sometimes as Ananda.

When you lost it before, it must have been due either to some uprising of vital imperfections in yourself or an attack from outside. Of course, the pressure need not always be there; but if things take the ordinary course, it usually recurs or else continues until the Adhar is open and there is no further obstacle to the descent of the higher consciousness.

18-9-1933

(8)

It is the descent of the Mother's Force from above through the spinal cord, it is a well-known movement. There are two or three kinds of descent. One is this touching the base of the centres which rest on the spinal cord. Another is through the head into the body going from level to level till the whole body is filled and opening all the centres of consciousness. Another is a descent enveloping the Adhar from outside.

1-2-1934

(9)

What the Mother did was to light the fire within—if you did not feel it, it must be because the outer

covering has not yet allowed it to come through into the outer consciousness. But something in the inner being must have kept it and opened more widely—that is shown by your experience in sleep, for that was evidently an action of the Mother in the inner being. The descent of the current in the spine is always a descent of the Mother's Force working in the centres to open them, and the strong force of the current you felt is an evident proof that the wider opening is there. You have only to persist and the effect both of the fire and the force will come out in the surface consciousness—for always there is a preparatory work behind the veil in the inner being before the veil thins or disappears and all the working can be done with the participation of the outer consciousness.

22-4-1937

(10)

Something is growing in you, but it is all inside—still if there is the steady persistence it is bound to come out. For instance, this white dazzling light with currents, it is a sure sign of the Force (the Mother's) entering and working in the *ādhār*, but it

came to you in sleep—that is to say, in the inner being, still behind the veil. The moment it came out, the dryness would disappear.

5-2-1937

Loss of Ego in the Mother's Consciousness

It is very good, you are right about the sub-conscious and environmental, for it is there that the influence must fall so that the consciousness may go upward and spread itself out widely in a free peace, light and joy connecting them down to the sub-conscious with the higher consciousness. It is then that the loss of the ego in the Mother's Consciousness becomes possible.

25-9-1935

Oneness with the Mother's Universal Consciousness

The consciousness of the mind, life, body in each person is ordinarily shut up in itself; it is narrow, not wide, sees itself as the centre of everything,

judges all things according to its own impressions—it does not know anything as it really is. But when by Yoga one begins to open to the true consciousness then this barrier begins to break down. One feels the mind grow wider, even in the end the physical consciousness grows wider and wider, until you feel all things in yourself, yourself one with all things. You then become one with the Mother's universal Consciousness. That is why you feel the mind becoming wide. But also there is much above the human mind and it is this which you feel like a world above your head. All these are the ordinary experiences of our Yoga. It is only a beginning. But in order that it may go on developing, you must become more and more quiet, more and more able to hold whatever comes without getting too eager and excited. Peace and calmness are the first thing, and with it wideness—in the peace you can bear whatever love or Ananda comes, whatever strength comes or whatever knowledge.

The Universal and the Transforming Power

Q: The more we open individually to the Mother's Light and Force, the more her power is established in the universal—is it not?

A: It is the transforming power that is established—the universal power is always there.

13-8-1933

The Mother's Force and the Gunas

Q: When one feels the Mother's Force acting through him and not his own, is it the Mother's Force alone that works in his actions and the gunas remain quiescent?

A: No, the gunas are there and not quiescent—for they are the intermediation. If the force and the inner consciousness are very strong, then there is a tendency for the rajas to become like some inferior form of tapas and the tamas to become more like a kind of inert shama. That is how the transformation begins, but usually it is very slow in its process.

29-1-1936

The Mother's Force in the Material

(1)

Q: When can it be said that the material is ready for the Divine?

A: If the material consciousness is open, feels the Mother's force working in it and responds, then it is ready.

11-6-1933

(2)

It (Mother's consciousness) can be there in all the atoms of the body since all is secretly conscious.

5-10-1933

Hindrance of the Active Mind

If the mind is active it is more difficult to become aware of what the Mother is bringing. It is not thoughts she brings, but the higher light, force, etc.

22-3-1934

Assimilation of the Mother's Force

(1)

As for Mother's force when one receives it the best way is to be quiet till it is assimilated. Afterwards it is alright, not lost by outward movement or mixing.

(2)

If the meditation brings poise, peace, a concentrated condition or even a pressure or influence, that can go on in the work, provided one does not throw it away by a relaxed or dispersed state of consciousness. That was why the Mother wanted people not only to be concentrated at Pranam or meditation but to remain silent and absorb or assimilate afterwards and also insisted on avoiding things that relax or disperse or dissipate too much—precisely for this reason that so the effects of what she put in them might continue and the change of attitude will take place. But I am afraid most of the sadhaks have never understood or practised anything of the kind—they could not appreciate or understand her directions.

(3)

Allow a quiet and steady will to progress to be settled in you; learn the habit of a silent, persistent and thorough assimilation of what the Mother puts into you. This is the sound way to advance.

March, 1928

Pulling at the Mother's Forces

When one is open and too eager and tries to pull down the force, experience, etc., instead of letting it descend quietly, that is called pulling. Many people pull at the Mother's forces—trying to take more than they can easily assimilate and disturbing the working.

April, 1935

Psychic Openness to the Mother's Force

What is needed is to profit by the discovery and get rid of the impediment. The Mother did not merely point out the impediment; she showed you very expressly how to get rid of it and at that time you understood her, though now (at the time of writing your letter to me) the light which you saw seems to have been clouded by your indulging your vital more and more in the bitter pastime of sadness. That was quite natural, for that is the result sadness always does bring. That is the reason why I object to the gospel of sorrow and to any sadhana which makes sorrow one of its main planks (*abhimān*, revolt, *viraha*). For sorrow is not, as Spinoza

pointed out, a passage to a greater perfection, a way to siddhi; it cannot be, for it confuses and weakens and distracts the mind, depresses the vital forces, darkens the spirit. A relapse from joy and vital elasticity and Ananda to sorrow, self-distrust, despondency and weakness is a recoil from a greater to a lesser consciousness,—the habit of these moods shows the clinging of something in the vital to the smaller, obscurer, dark and distressed movement out of which it is the very aim of Yoga to rise.

It is, therefore, quite incorrect to say that the Mother took away the wrong key with which you were trying to open the Faery Palace and left you with none at all. For she not only showed you the true key but gave it to you. It was not a mere vague exhortation to cheerfulness she gave you, but she described exactly the condition felt in the right kind of meditation—a state of inner rest, not of straining, of quiet opening, not of eager or desperate pulling, a harmonious giving of oneself to the Divine Force for its workings and in that a sense of the Force working and a restful confidence and allowing it to work without any unquiet interference. And she asked you if you had not experienced that condition and you said you had and knew it very well. Now that condition is the psy-

chic opening and, if you have had it, you know what the psychic opening is; of course, there is much more that afterwards comes, but this is the fundamental condition in which it can most easily come. What you should have done was to keep the key the Mother gave you present in your consciousness and apply it—not to go back and allow sadness and the repining view of the past to grow upon you. In this condition, which you call the right or the psychic attitude, there may be call, prayer, aspiration; intensity, concentration will come of themselves, not by a hard effort or tense strain on the nature. Rejection of wrong movements, frank confession of defects are not only not incompatible, but helpful to it, but this attitude makes the rejection, the confession easy, spontaneous, entirely complete and sincere and effective. That is the experience of all who have consented to take this attitude.

I may say in passing that consciousness and receptivity are not the same thing; one may be receptive, yet externally unaware of how things are being done and of what is being done. The Force works, as I have repeatedly written, behind the veil. The results remain packed behind and come out afterwards, often slowly, little by little, until there is so much pressure that it breaks through somehow and

forces itself upon the external nature. There is a difference between a mental and a vital straining and pulling and a spontaneous psychic openness, and it is not at all the first time that we have spoken of the difference. The Mother and myself have written and spoken of it times without number and we have deprecated pulling¹ and straining and advocated the attitude of psychic openness. It is not really a question of the right or the wrong key, but of putting the key in the lock in the right or the wrong way; either, because of some difficulty, you try to force the lock turning the key this way or that with violence, or confidently and quietly give it the right turn and the door opens.

5-5-1932

Necessity of Discrimination

It is dangerous to think of giving up "all barrier of discrimination and defence against what is trying to descend" upon you. Have you thought what this would mean if what is descending is something not in consonance with the divine Truth, perhaps even

¹ There is a steady drawing of the Force possible which is not what I mean by pulling—drawing of the Force is quite common and helpful.

adverse? An Adverse Power would ask no better condition for getting control over the seeker. It is only the Mother's force and the divine Truth that one should admit without barriers. And even there one must keep the power of discernment in order to detect anything false that comes masquerading as the Mother's force and the divine Truth, and keep too the power of rejection that will throw away all mixture.

Keep faith in your spiritual destiny, draw back from error and open more the psychic being to the direct guidance of the Mother's light and power. If the central will is sincere, each recognition of a mistake can become a stepping stone to a truer movement and a higher progress.

•

e

Safeguards against Dangers in Descent

(1)

In this process of the descent from above and the working it is most important not to rely entirely on oneself, but to rely on the guidance of the Guru and to refer all that happens to his judgment and arbitration and decision. For it often happens that

the forces of the lower nature are stimulated and excited by the descent and want to mix with it and turn it to their profit. It often happens too that some Power or Powers undivine in their nature present themselves as the Supreme Lord or as the Divine Mother and claim the being's service and surrender. If these things are accepted, there will be an extremely disastrous consequence. If indeed there is the assent of the sadhak to the Divine working alone and the submission or surrender to that guidance, then all can go smoothly. This assent and a rejection of all egoistic forces or forces that appeal to the ego are the safeguard throughout the sadhana. But the ways of nature are full of snares, the disguises of the ego are innumerable, the illusions of the Powers of Darkness, Rakshasi Maya, are extraordinarily skilful; the reason is an insufficient guide and often turns traitor; vital desire is always with us tempting to follow any alluring call. This is the reason why in this Yoga we insist so much on what we call *samarpana*—rather inadequately rendered by the English word surrender. If the heart centre is fully opened and the psychic is always in control, then there is no question; all is safe. But the psychic can at any moment be veiled by a lower upsurge. It is only a few who are exempt from these dangers and it is precisely those to whom surrender is

easily possible. The guidance of one who is himself by identity or represents the Divine is in this difficult endeavour imperative and indispensable.

(2)

Let nothing and nobody come between you and the Mother's force. It is on your admitting and keeping that force and responding to the true inspiration and not on any ideas the mind may form that success will depend. Even ideas or plans which might otherwise be useful, will fail if there is not behind them the true spirit and the true force and influence.

(3)

If you want to get back your faith and keep it, you must first quiet your mind and make it open and obedient to the Mother's Force. If you have an excited mind at the mercy of every influence and impulse, you will remain a field of conflicting and contrary forces and cannot progress. You will begin to listen to your own ignorance instead of the Mother's knowledge and your faith will naturally

disappear and you will get into a wrong condition and a wrong attitude.

March, 1928

Help of the Mother's Force for Change

(1)

It is to be assumed that you are capable of the change since you are here in the presence and under the protection of the Mother. The pressure and help of the Mother's Force is always there. Your rapidity of progress depends upon your keeping yourself open to it and rejecting calmly, quietly and steadily all suggestions and invasions of other forces. Especially, the nervous excitement of the vital has to be rejected; a calm and quiet strength in the nervous being and the body is the only sound basis. It is there for you to receive, if you open to it always.

27-8-1932

(2)

Do not allow yourself to be troubled or dis-

couraged by any difficulties, but quietly and simply open yourself to the Mother's Force and allow it to change you.

§

(3)

The Mother's Force is not only above on the summit of the being. It is there with you and near you, ready to act whenever your nature will allow it. It is so with everybody here.

15-11-1936

(4)

The Mother's Force may do everything, but one has to become more and more conscious of one's own being and nature and what is below in it.

It is not a question of mental judgment,—that is of little use in these matters, but of the consciousness, feeling and seeing.

Supermind is not organised in the lower planes as the others are. It is only a veiled influence. Otherwise the supramental realisation would be easy.

22-5-1934

(5)

You should not rely on anything else alone, however helpful it may seem, but chiefly, primarily, fundamentally on the Mother's Force. The Sun and the Light may be a help, and will be if it is the true Light and the true Sun, but cannot take the place of the Mother's Force.

(6)

The steadiness you have gained is not a personal virtue but depends on your keeping the contact with the Mother—for it is her Force that is behind it and behind all the progress you can make. Learn to rely on that Force, to open to it more completely and to seek spiritual progress even not for your own sake but for the sake of the Divine—then you will go more smoothly.

(7)

They are unable to progress for two reasons: (1) because they yield to despair and gloom and the illusion of impotence; (2) because they try only with

their own strength and do not care or know how to call in the working of the Mother's force.

10-6-1936

Resistance to the Mother's Force

The illnesses you have are the signs of the resistance of your physical consciousness to the action of the Divine Power.

If you cannot advance in your sadhana, it is because you are divided and do not give yourself without reserve. You speak of surrendering everything to the Mother but you have not done even the one thing which she asked of you and which you have promised more than once. If after having called the action of the Divine force, you allow other influences to prevail, how can you expect to be free from obstruction and difficulties?

20-11-1928

The Mother's Use of Pressure

I was speaking of your case only—it was not my intention to say that the Mother never uses pressure.

But pressure also can be of various kinds. There is a pressure of the Force when it is entering the mind or vital or body—a pressure to go faster, a pressure to build or form, a pressure to break and many more. In your case if there is any pressure it is that of help or support or removal of an attack, but it does not seem to me that that can properly be called pressure.

Action of The Mother's Mahakali Power

(I)

Q: On page 56 of *"The Mother"* it is said about the Mahakali power of the Mother that "her hands are outstretched to strike and to succour". What is meant by "strike" here?

A: It expresses her general action in the world. She strikes at the Asuras, she strikes also at everything that has to be got rid of or destroyed, at the obstacles to the sadhana, etc. I may say that the Mother never uses the Mahakali power in your case nor the Mahakali pressure.

5-6-1936

(2)

Q: About the Mother's Mahakali aspect it is said in "The Mother": "When she is allowed to intervene in her strength, then in one moment are broken like things without consistence the obstacles that immobilise or the enemies that assail the seeker." How is this intervention of the Mahakali force felt?

A: It is felt as if something swift, sudden, decisive and imperative. When it intervenes, it has a kind of divine or supramental sanction behind it and is like a fiat against which there is no appeal. What is done cannot be reversed or undone. The adverse forces may try, may even touch or invade, but they retire baffled and it is seen as soon as they withdraw that the past ground has remained intact—it is felt even in the attack. Also the difficulties that were strong before it touched by this fiat lose their power, their verisimilitude destroyed or are weak shadows that come only to flicker and fade away. I say 'allowed' because this supreme action of Mahakali is comparatively rare, the action of the other Powers or a partial action of Mahakali is more common.

24-8-1933

34

The Present Working of Sadhana

Q: Is it true that it is mostly the Mahasaraswati aspect of the Mother that works in our sadhana here?

A: At present since the sadhana came down to the physical consciousness—or rather it is a combination of Maheshwari-Mahasaraswati forces.

25-8-1933

The Mother's Working in the Preparatory Consciousness

The experiences you have are a good starting-point for realisation. They have to develop into the light of a deeper state in which there will be the descent of a higher consciousness into you. Your present consciousness in which you feel these things is only a preparatory one—in which the Mother works in you through the cosmic power according to your state of consciousness and your Karma, and in that working both success and failure can come—one has to remain equal-minded to both while trying for success. A surer guidance can come even in this preparatory consciousness if

you are entirely turned towards her alone in such a way that you can feel her direct guidance and follow it without any other influence or force intervening to act upon you, but that condition is not easy to get or to keep—it needs a great one-pointedness and constant single-minded dedication. When the higher consciousness will descend, then a closer union, a more intimate consciousness of the Presence and a more illumined intuition will become possible.

17-11-1934

Receiving the Mother's Force at a Distance

(1)

As to what your other friend asks, it is quite possible for him to receive where he is without coming here if he has the adoration of the Mother in his heart and an intense call.

25-8-1935

(2)

Q: You said regarding my friend X that he was receiving

the force of the Mother. I am a little puzzled because I cannot understand to which Mother you are referring. Is it our Mother or some other, called the Universal Mother by the people? I am puzzled because he does not invoke the Mother and still he gets the Mother's force!

A: "In contact with" the Divine Force which is the force of the Mother—that was what I wrote, I believe. Have you not put him, by the photograph and his letter, in connection with us? Has he not turned in this direction? Has he not met Y and been impressed by him—a third channel of contact? That is quite sufficient to help him to a contact if he has the faith and the Yogic stress in him.

1936

(3)

I don't know whether Mother is sending force in the accepted sense; I haven't asked her. In any case, anyone can receive the force who has faith and sincerity, whose psychic being has begun to wake and who opens himself,—whether he knows or not that he is receiving. If X even imagines that he is receiving, that may open the way to a

real reception,—if he *feels* it, why question his feeling? He is certainly trying hard to change and that is the first necessity; if one tries it can always be done, in more or less time.

28-6-1943

(4)

It is quite possible for you to do sadhana at home and in the midst of your work—many do so. What is necessary in the beginning is to remember the Mother as much as possible, to concentrate on her in the heart for a time every day, if possible thinking of her as the Divine Mother, to aspire to feel her there within you, offer her your works and pray^o that from within she may guide and sustain you. This is a preliminary stage which often takes long, but if one goes through it with sincerity and steadfastness, the mentality begins little by little to change and a new consciousness opens in the sadhak which begins to be aware more and more of the Mother's presence within, of her working in the nature and in the life or of some other spiritual experience which opens the gate towards realisation.

(5)

Remember the Mother and, though physically far from her, try to feel her with you and act according to what your inner being tells you would be her Will. Then you will be best able to feel her presence and mine and carry our atmosphere around you as a protection and a zone of quietude and light accompanying you everywhere.

12-12-1936

Receiving Force from Mother's Photographs

Q: When I sit in meditation before the Mother's photographs or the drawing of her feet, I receive Force. Is this only a subjective feeling?

A: No, it is not subjective merely. By your meditating near them you have been able to enter through them into communion with the Mother and something of Her Power and Her Presence is there.

14-7-1934

The Mother and the Action of the Healing Force

(1)

Q: I had an animated but friendly discussion with X about the action of the healing force. He was of the opinion that now that it has been brought down here it is likely to operate in other parts of the world and that any Tom, Dick and Harry can wield it even if spiritually undeveloped. Is this true?

A: It may operate but not through every T, D and H, at first at least.

3-2-1936

• (2)

Q: I contended that the healing force will act only through the Mother and others will be able to wield it if they are in some way open to or in conscious rapport with her and in physical contact with her. Nobody will be able to use it without fulfilling these conditions. What do you say?

A: At first it will be no doubt like that, if it is to be the true Force, but when once it is settled in the earth-consciousness, a more general use of the

supraphysical Force for healing may become possible.

It is not always necessary either that the rapport you speak of should be conscious. Coué, for instance, was in rapport with the Mother without knowing it. She told me of his getting something of the Force and of the beginning of his work long before he was known to anyone (of course, she did not know his name, but described him and his work in such a way that the identification was evident).

3-2-1936

VI

THE MOTHER'S PRESENCE

The Constant Presence

Live always as if you were under the very eye of the Supreme and of the Divine Mother. Do nothing, try to think and feel nothing that would be unworthy of the Divine Presence.

** The Mother's Personal Presence Everywhere*

Q: You have written: "Always behave as if the Mother was looking at you; because she is, indeed, always present." You explained to me that this does not mean that she was physically present everywhere because that was impossible. But when I asked the Mother about this, she said that she was personally present at all places. How to reconcile these contradictory statements?

A: If by physically you mean corporeally, in her visible tangible material body, it is obvious that it cannot be. When you asked Mother that question she did not understand you to mean that—she said she could be present everywhere, and she meant, of course, in her consciousness. It is a consciousness and not the body that is the being, the person, the body is only a support and instrument for the action of the consciousness. Mother can be personally present in her consciousness. The universal presence, of course, is always there and the universal and personal are two aspects of the same being.

25-8-1936

*The Mother's Knowing of Peoples' Thoughts
and Actions*

(I)

Q: You have said: "Always behave as if the Mother was looking at you; because she is, indeed, always present." Does this mean that the Mother knows all our insignificant thoughts always, or only when she concentrates?

A: It is said that the Mother is always present and looking at you. This does not mean that in her physical mind she is thinking of you always and seeing your thoughts. There is no need of that, since she is everywhere and acts everywhere out of her universal knowledge.

12-8-1933

(2)

Q: In what sense is the Mother everywhere? Does she know all happenings in the physical plane?

A: Including what Llyod George had for breakfast today or what Roosevelt said to his wife about the servants? Why should the Mother "know" in the human way all happenings in the physical plane? Her business in her embodiment is to know the workings of the universal forces and use them for her works; for the rest she knows what she needs to know, sometimes with her inner self, sometimes with her physical mind. All knowledge is available in her universal self, but she brings forward only what is needed to be brought forward so that the working is done.

13-8-1933

(3)

Q: Someone said that the Mother sees all our physical movements. How does this happen? Are all our physical movements reflected on her mind and seen by her as images or they occur in her consciousness at the same time as we do them? But would that not be very puzzling and cumbersome to her? Moreover, would it not be a very material kind of telepathy?

A: It would not be worthwhile. Mother can see what people are doing by images received by her in the subtle state which corresponds to sleep or concentration or by images or intimations received in the ordinary state; but much even of what comes to her automatically like that is unnecessary, and to be always receiving everything would be intolerably troublesome as it would keep the consciousness occupied with a million trivialities; so that does not happen. What is more important is to know their inner condition and it is this chiefly which comes to her.

29-6-1937

(4)

What you write about X is true....She does not

realise that Mother knows all these things by other means and any information given to her only adds certain physical precisions to what she knows already.

How can she be open when she has such ideas against the Mother? They must necessarily shut her up to the Mother's influence.

Mother has written to her that Y had said nothing and that she knew things about X independently of any information, from X's inner being itself which comes to her constantly and tells her or shows her what is in the nature.

The Mother besides sees things in vision and receives the thoughts of the sadhaks at Pranam and other times....Only the Mother never acts on these supraphysical intimations unless there is physical confirmation like the letter itself in this case. For nobody would understand her action—the sadhaks living in the physical mind would state her action unfounded, and those affected would deny loudly—as many have done in the past—their secret thoughts, feelings and actions. I tell you all this in confidence so that you may understand what is the real basis of Mother's letters to X.

10-9-1936

The Mother's Presence Within

(1)

He must go into himself and find the presence of the Divine Mother within and the psychic behind the heart and from there the knowledge will come and all the power to dissolve the inner obstacles.

(2)

The constant presence of the Mother comes by practice; the Divine Grace is essential for success in the sadhana, but it is the practice that prepares the descent of the Grace.

You have to learn to go inward, ceasing to live in external things only, quiet the mind and aspire to become aware of the Mother's workings in you.

The Presence in Front

Q: In the evening meditation, there was an intense movement of surrender from the heart. I had the feeling of Mother's presence immediately in front

and aspiration rose from below the feet, from the legs, from the Muladhar centre; there was a willing and loving surrender from the heart, from the entire being, as if for fulfilment. I suppose the psychic being came to the front. But why did I feel the Mother's presence in front and not within me?

A: You had the psychic condition then and that means a coming of the influence of the psychic being to the front. It is when there is complete psychic opening that there is the presence within. The presence in front means that it was with you but had still to enter within.

13-7-1937

•
•
° *The Presence in the Heart-Beats*

But I do not see why I call the feeling sentimental or think that your sense of the presence of the Mother in the heart-beats etc. was unreal. It was your psychic being that suggested it to you and the response showed that the consciousness was ready. Mother felt that something was happening in you and felt that it was the beginning of a realisation—she was encouraging it and did not discourage. If

it had been a wrong or vital movement she would not have felt like that.

13-8-1934

The Presence during the Day

If you feel the Mother's presence for the greater part of the day, it means that it is your psychic being that is active and feels like that; for without the activity of the psychic it would not be possible. Therefore your psychic being is there and not at all far off.

14-3-1935

The Presence during Sleep

It (the feeling of the Mother's presence during sleep) follows naturally the presence in the waking state, but it takes a little time.

11-1-1935

The Presence in Work

It is for the most people not easy to feel the Mother's presence with the work—they feel as if they are doing the work, the mind getting busy and not having the right passivity or quietude.

Writing to the Mother and Feeling Her Presence

The feeling of the Mother's presence or nearness does not depend on whether you write or do not write. Many who write often do not feel it, some who write seldom feel her always close.

11-6-1936

*Feeling of Presence and Oneness
with the Mother*

There is no such necessary precedence as that first one must feel the Presence and then only can one feel oneself the Mother's; it is more often the increase of the feeling that brings the Presence. For the feeling comes from the psychic conscious-

ness and it is the growth of the psychic consciousness that makes the constant Presence at last possible. The feeling comes from the psychic and is true of the inner being—its not being yet fulfilled in 'the whole does not make it an imagination; on the contrary, the more it grows the more is the likelihood of the whole being fulfilling this truth; the inner *bhava* takes more and more possession of the outer consciousness and remoulds it so as to make it a truth there also. This is the constant principle of action in the Yogic transformation—what is true within comes out and takes possession of the mind and heart and will and through them prevails over the ignorance of the outer members and brings the inner truth out there also.

16-9-1936

Veiling of the Mother's Presence

(1)

The Mother's presence is always there; but if you decide to act on your own—your own idea, your own notion of things, your own will and demand upon things, then it is quite likely that her

presence will get veiled; it is not she who withdraws from you, but you who draw back from her. But your mind and vital don't want to admit that, because it is always their preoccupation to justify their own movements. If the psychic were allowed its full predominance, this would not happen; it would have felt the veiling, but it would at once have said, "There must have been some mistake in me, a mist has arisen in me", and it would have looked and found the cause.

25-3-1932

(2)

The Presence whose fading you regret can only be felt if the inner being continues to be consecrated and the outer nature is put into harmony or at least kept under the touch of the inner spirit.

But if you do things which your inner being does not approve, this condition will be eventually tarnished and, each time, the possibility of your feeling the Presence will diminish. You must have a strong will to purification and an aspiration that does not flag and cease, if the Mother's grace is to be there and effective.

VII

TRUE RELATION WITH THE MOTHER

Relation between the Mother and the Sadhaks

The relation which exists between the Mother and all who accept her is a psychic and spiritual motherhood. It is a far greater relation than that of the physical mother to her child; it gives all that human motherhood can give, but in a much higher way, and it contains in itself infinitely more. It can therefore, because it is greater and more complete, take altogether the room of the physical relation and replace it both in the inward and the outward life. There is nothing here that can confuse anyone who has common sense and a straightforward intelligence. The physical fact cannot in the least stand in the way of the greater and spiritual truth or prevent it from being true. X is perfectly right when he says that this is his true mother; for she has given him a new birth in an inner life and is creating him anew for a diviner existence.

The idea of a spiritual motherhood is not an invention of this Ashram; it is an eternal truth which has been recognised for ages past both in Europe and in Asia. The distinction I have drawn between the physical relation and the psychic and spiritual relation is also not a new invention; it is an idea known and understood everywhere and found to be perfectly plain and simple by all.

23-10-1929

Special Relations with the Mother

It is certainly true that the Divine has no preferences or dislikes and is equal to all, but that does not prevent there being a special relationship with each. This relation, however, does not depend on the more or less identification or union. The purer soul has an easier access to the Divine. The more developed nature has more lines on which to meet Him. The identification creates a spiritual oneness. But there are other personal relations which are created by other causes. It is too complex for all relations to be determined by one cause.

Yes, Yogis whose progress does not depend on the personal intervention of the Mother, need have

no personal relation with her—only the spiritual contact in distance. Some may have a special relation, but that is due to special aspects of their sadhana. On the other hand, one may have a personal relation with the Mother even though no progress has been made in the sadhana. There are all kinds of possibilities in this matter.

There is such a relation with all of those who have come here with a psychic sufficiently developed to admit of the relation. In other cases it is more a possibility than a thing realised.

There are, roughly speaking, three parts of the being in manifestation which come into play here: (1) the psychic being in evolution which brings with it its past experience of past lives and something of the old personalities, so much as it can make helpful for the present life; (2) the present formation due to this birth and made up of many complex factors; (3) the future being, which in our own case means the great lines of higher consciousness above the present manifestation by joining which the transformation becomes more possible and the work attempted can be done.

It is the psychic being which brings in the contact through past lives or personalities, i.e. through something essential and still operative in them which it has kept.

But, in addition, some psychic beings have come here who are ready to join with great lines of consciousness above, represented often by beings of the higher planes and are therefore specially fitted to join with the Mother intimately in the great work that has to be done. These have all special relation with the Mother which adds to the past one.

As for the present formation, it may obviously have elements which, not being joined or met with the Mother, may feel themselves strange to her. It is such an element which may feel standing in the way; but it is an exterior formation and does not belong to the past or the future evolution, at any rate in its present figure. It must either disappear or change.

10-6-1935

(2)

If the sadhak becomes unfaithful to the Mother, it means that he did not want the sadhana or the Mother but the satisfaction of his desires and his ego. That is not Yoga.

The Mother meets nobody for "hours"—if anybody stayed for hours she would get very tired.

Mother did not meet X more than others because she loved him more than others but because she was trying to get something done through him for the work, which, if done, would have been a great victory for all. But precisely because he took it in the wrong way, grasping at it as a personal physical relation and satisfaction of his egoistic desire, he failed and had to go away. Your "part" makes the same stupid ignorant claim of the sensuous ego and if the Mother were so foolish as to satisfy it, it would turn up like X.

Mother has taken the body because a work of a physical nature (including a change in the physical world) had to be done, she has not come to establish a "physical relation" with people. Some have come with her to share in the work, others she had called, others have come seeking for the light. With each she has a personal relation or a possibility of the personal relation, but each is of its own kind and no one can say that she must do equally same thing with each person. No one can claim as a right that she must be physically near to him because she is physically near to others. Some have chosen personal relation with her yet she sees little of them—some have a less close personal relation yet for one reason or another may see her much oftener or longer. To apply silly mathematical rules of the

physical mind here is absurd. Your physical mind cannot understand what the Mother does, its values and standards and ideas are not hers. It is still worse to make your personal vital demand or desire the measure of what she ought to do. That way spiritual ruin lies. She acts in each case for different reasons suitable to that case.

* . *Inner Union and External Contact
with the Mother*

The spiritual union must begin from within and spread out from there; it cannot be based on anything exterior—for, if so based, the union cannot be spiritual or real. That is the great mistake which so many make here: they put the whole emphasis on the external vital or physical relation with the Mother, insist on a vital interchange or else physical contact and when they do not get it to their satisfaction, enter into all kinds of disturbances, revolt, doubt, depression. This is a wrong view-point altogether and has caused much obstruction and trouble. The mind, vital, physical can participate and are intended to participate in the union, but for that they must be submitted to the psychic,

themselves psychicised, the union must be an essentially psychic and spiritual union spreading out to the mind, vital and physical. Even the physical must be able to feel invisibly the Mother's closeness, her concrete presence—then alone can the union be truly based and completed and then alone can any physical closeness or contact find its true value and fulfil its spiritual purpose. Till then any physical contact is of value only so far as it helps the inner sadhana, but how much can be given and what will help or hinder, the Mother only can judge, the sadhak cannot be the judge—he will be led away by the desires and lower vital ego, as so many have been in fact. When the vital demand is there with its claims and revolts and takes the desire for the exterior contact or closeness as a cause or occasion for these things, then it becomes a serious hindrance to the development of the inner union, it does not help at all. The sadhaks always imagine in their ignorance that when the Mother sees more of one person than of another, it is because of personal preference and that she is giving more love and help to that person. That is altogether a mistake. Physical closeness and contact can be a severe ordeal for the sadhak; it may raise the vital demands, claims, jealousies, etc. to a high pitch; it may, on the other hand, leave him satisfied

with an outer relation without making any serious effort for the inner union; or it becomes for him something mechanical, because ordinary and familiar, and for any inner purpose quite ineffective—these things are not only possible but have happened in many cases. The Mother knows that and her arrangements in this matter are therefore dictated by quite other reasons than those which are attributed to her.

The only safe thing is to concentrate on the inner union foremost and altogether, to make that the one thing to be achieved and to leave aside all claims and demands for anything external, remaining satisfied with what the Mother gives and relying wholly on her wisdom and solicitude. It ought to be quite evident that a desire which raises revolt, doubt, depression, desperate struggles cannot be a true part of the spiritual movement. If your mind tells you that it is the right thing, then surely you must distrust the mind's suggestions. Concentrate entirely on the one thing needful and put away, if they come, all ideas and forces that want to disturb it or make you deviate. The vital assent to these things has to be overcome, but for that the first thing is to refuse all mental assent, for the mental support gives them a greater force than they would otherwise have. Fix the right attitude

in the mind and the deeper emotional being—cling to that when contrary forces arise and by your firmness in that psychic attitude repel them.

14-3-1937

True Children of the Mother

Those are the Mother's children closest to her who are open to her, close to her in her inner being, one with her will—not those who come bodily nearest to her.

The Outer and the Inner Mother

It is true that the Mother is one in many forms, but the distinction between the outer and the inner Mother must not be made too trenchant; for she is not only one, but the physical Mother contains all the others in herself and in her is established the communication between the inner and the outer existence. But to know the outer Mother truly one must know what is within her and not look at the outer appearances only. That is only possible if one meets her with the inner being and grows into her

consciousness—those who seek an outer relation only cannot do that.

FO-8-1936

True Inner Relation with the Mother

(I)

An inner (soul) relation means that one feels the Mother's presence, is turned to her at all times, is aware of her force moving, guiding, helping, is full of love for her and always feels a great nearness whether one is physically near her or not. This relation takes up the mind, vital and inner physical till one feels one's mind close to the Mother's mind, one's vital in harmony with hers, one's very physical consciousness full of her. These are all the elements of the inner union, not only in the spirit and self but in the nature.

I do not recollect what I had written, but this is the close inner relation as opposed to an outer relation which consists only in how one meets her in the external physical plane. It is quite possible and actual to have this close inner relation even if physically one sees her only at Pranam and meditation and once a year perhaps on the birthday.

(2)

The connection is always there, in the self and in the psychic; but if there are obstacles in the mind, vital and the physical, then the connection cannot manifest or, if at all manifest, it is mixed with elements which make it imperfect and unsuitable. The true connection is the psychic and spiritual relation; the relation in other parts must be kept up on the basis of this psychic and spiritual connection and then it can be permanent.

(3)

The relation with the Divine, the relation with the Mother must be one of love, faith, trust, confidence, surrender; any other relation of the vital ordinary kind brings reactions contrary to the sadhana,—desire, egoistic *abhimān*, demand, revolt and all the disturbance of ignorant rajasic human nature from which it is the object of the sadhana to escape.

26-4-1933

The Constant Psychic Nearness

(1)

Q: I am feeling very close to the Mother as if there is no difference. But how can this be possible, as there is such a great gulf between her and me—she being on the Supramental and I on the mental plane?

A: But the Mother is there not only on the Supramental but on all the planes. And especially she is close to everyone in the psychic part (the inner heart), so when that opens, the feeling of nearness naturally comes.

11-12-1933

(2)

All that is needed is for your psychic being to come forward and to open you to the direct and real and constant inner contact of myself and the Mother. Hitherto your soul has expressed itself through the mind and its ideals and admirations or through the vital and its higher joys and aspirations; but that is not sufficient to conquer the physical difficulty and enlighten and transform Matter. It is your soul in itself, your psychic being that must come in front, awaken entirely and make the fundamental change.

The psychic being will not need the support of intellectual ideas or outer signs and helps. It is that alone that can give you the direct feeling of the Divine, the constant nearness, the inner support and aid. You will not then feel the Mother remote or have any further doubt about the realisation; for the mind thinks and the vital craves, but the soul feels and knows the Divine.

(3)

What you write here is an exact description of the psychic being and its relation to the Mother. That is the true relation. If you want to succeed in this Yoga, you must take your stand on the psychic relation and reject the egoistic vital movement. The psychic being coming to the front and staying there is the decisive movement in the Yóga. It is that which happened when you saw the Mother last, the psychic came in front. But you must keep it in front. You will not be able to do that if you listen to the vital ego and its outcries. It is by faith and surrender and the joy of pure self-giving—the psychic attitude—that one grows into the Truth and becomes united with the Divine.

26-2-1933

(4)

Q: When I could not properly concentrate, I called down Purity from above. At once the whole being was filled with Peace and Purity and, without any difficulty, I felt the Mother's Presence in the heart. An intense aspiration rose from the heart, from below, in fact, from all parts of the being. The heart was filled with adoration for the Mother; there was devotion, a genuine surrender, a great relief in union with the Mother. There was an intense aspiration for Purity. Was it a psychic opening?

A: Yes, certainly, it was a psychic opening and at the point emphasised which is very important, the opening to the higher Purity. That is one of the most important things for the psychic opening and the inner relation with the Mother.

14-7-1937

(5)

That which calls is your own psychic being whose place is deep behind the heart-centre. Many people feel at times the call for the Mother going on from there. It comes more easily in sleep or in a half-waking condition because then the surface mind is

not active so that what is going on within in the inner being can manifest itself.

29-10-1934

The True Basis of Sadhana

(1)

Yes, that is the true basis. In the perfect equality wholly united with the Mother—so the higher consciousness can be lived and brought even into the outermost parts of the nature.

22-5-1934

(2)

The more the union with the Mother increases, the better for the sadhana.

2-10-1933

(3)

Yes, it is a very encouraging progress. If you keep the wideness and calm as you were keeping it and

also the love for the Mother in the heart, then all is safe—for it means the double foundation of the Yoga—the descent of the higher consciousness with its peace and freedom and serenity from above and the openness of the psychic which keeps all the effort or all the spontaneous movement turned towards the true goal.

10-10-1934

Psychic Contact in the Ashram and Outside

(I)

It is certainly quite true that the psychic contact can exist at a distance and that the Divine is not limited by place, but is everywhere. It is not necessary for everybody to be in the Ashram or physically near the Mother in order to lead the spiritual life or to practise the Yoga, especially in its early stages. But it is only one side of the truth; there is another, otherwise the logical conclusion might be that there was no necessity for the Mother to be here at all, or for the existence of the Ashram, or for anyone to come here.

The psychic being is there in all, but in very few is it well developed, well built up in the consciousness or prominent in the front; in most it is veiled, often ineffective or only an influence, not conscious enough or strong enough to support the spiritual life.

It is for this reason that it is necessary for those drawn towards this Truth to come here in order that they may receive the touch which will bring about or prepare the awakening of the psychic being—that is for them the beginning of the effective psychic contact.

It is also for this reason that a stay here is needed for many—if they are ready—in order that under the direct influence and nearness they may have the development or building up of the psychic being in the consciousness or its coming to the front. When the touch has been given or the development effected, so far as the sadhak is at the moment capable of it, he returns to the outside world and under the protection and guidance even at a distance is able to keep the contact and go on with his spiritual life. But the influences of the outside world are not favourable to the psychic contact and the psychic development and, if the sadhak is not sufficiently careful or concentrated, the psychic contact may easily be lost after a time

or get covered over and the development may become retarded, stationary or even diminished by adverse movements or influences. It is therefore that the necessity exists and is often felt of a return to the place of the central influence in order to fortify or recover the contact or to restore or give a fresh forward impulse to the development. The aspiration for such nearness from time to time is not a vital desire; it becomes a vital desire only when it is egoistically insistent or mixed with a vital motive, but not if it is an aspiration of the psychic being calm, deep and without clamour in it or perturbing insistence.

This for those who are not called upon or are not yet called upon to live in this Ashram under the direct pressure of the central Force and Presence. Those who must so live are those called from the very beginning or who have become ready or who are for some reason or another given a chance to form a part of the work or creation which is being prepared by Yoga. For them the stay here in the atmosphere, the nearness are indispensable; to depart would be for them a renunciation of the opportunity given them, a turning of the back upon the spiritual destiny. Their difficulties are often in appearance greater than the struggle of those who remain outside because the demand and the pressure

are greater; but so also is their opportunity greater and the power and the influence for the development poured upon them and that too which they can spiritually become and will become if they are faithful to the choice and the call.

7-10-1931

(2)

Q: Is there any special effect of physical nearness to the Mother?

A: It is indispensable for the fullness of the sadhana on the physical plane. Transformation of the physical and external being is not possible otherwise.

18-8-1933

(3)

Q: Is it possible to receive the Mother's contact and help almost in the same way at a great distance—say Bombay or Calcutta—as here in the Ashram?

A: One can receive everywhere and if there is a strong spiritual consciousness one can make great

progress. But experience does not support the idea that it makes no difference or is almost the same.

■
18-8-1933

*Physical Nearness to the Mother and Progress
in Sadhana*

(1)

It is a mistake to think that those who meet the Mother physically are any nearer the goal of perfection than those who do not meet her except at Pranam and meditation. All depends on the inner being and how it can meet her from within and receive her force and profit by it. Of course, if people meet her with their psychic prominent, and not with the outer consciousness only, it should be different, but—

29-7-1936

(2)

Q: Many people believe that those whom the Mother gives frequent interviews and sends things often are

very near to her and are progressing rapidly while those whom she does not see often or to whom she does not send things are only given a chance to do their sadhana. Is this belief true?

A: It is all nonsense. Some of the best sadhaks are among those whom the Mother seldom or never calls and she sends them nothing. Nor do they expect it—they feel the Mother always with them and are satisfied and ask for nothing else.

27-7-1933

(3)

Q: You have said that those who do sadhana outside the Ashram cannot do it fully because the physical nearness to the Mother in the Ashram alone can bring a possibility of transformation. Carrying this idea a little further, it naturally follows that even in the Ashram, those who live physically nearer to the Mother and meet her more often are of the inner circle, more intimate even outwardly, and therefore nearer transformation. Q. E. D.?

A: Living in the Ashram is one thing, living with the Mother in close precincts is another. Your

Q.E.D. like most mental logic is contradicted by the facts of life. One would argue on that basis that A who lives in the same house as the Mother is nearer perfection than B and much nearer than C or D who live outside. E never meets the Mother except at Pranam and on her birthday, so she must be an utterly backward person and F who meets the Mother daily for five, ten, fifteen or twenty minutes must be far ahead of her, well on towards perfection. But these things are not so. So the argument breaks down at every point. Progress in sadhana or superior capacity is not dependent on one's being near the Mother or meeting her more often.

30-7-1936

(4)

Q: People who approach the Mother often must be very fortunate, is it not so?

A: If one has the desire or the claim, one brings in all sorts of demands, angers, jealousies, despairs, revolts, etc. which spoil the sadhana and do not help it. To others the nearness of the Mother becomes a mixture.

The Mother was giving freely of her physical contact in former years. If the sadhaks had had the right reactions, do you think she would have drawn back and reduced it to a minimum? Of course, if people know in what spirit to receive from her, the physical touch is a great thing—but for that the constant physical nearness is not necessary. That rather creates a pressure of the highest force which how many can meet and satisfy?

May, 1935

(5)

The one thing important is to keep the inner attitude and establish the inner connection with the Mother independent of all outward circumstances. It is that that brings all that is needed. Those who are most deep in the Yoga are not those who physically see most of the Mother. There are some who are in constant nearness or union with her, who apart from the Pranam and the evening meditation come to her only once a year.

13-II-1934

(6)

There is more profit to be had by being open to the Mother than by coming physically to her at the present stage. Some even who make a point of her calling them go backward rather than forward—because they make a point of it, introducing thus a basis of vital demand which makes a very shaky foundation for relations with the Mother.

(7)

No. It depends entirely on the condition of the person and his attitude. Especially, if they insist on seeing her or on remaining when she wants them to go or are in a bad mood and throw it on her, it is very harmful for them to see her. Each should be contented with what the Mother gives them, for she alone feels what they can or cannot receive. Mental constructions of this kind and vital demands are always false.

3-4-1934

(8)

There is a confusion here. The Mother's grace is

one thing, the call to change another, the pressure of nearness to her is yet another. Those who are physically near to her are not so by any special grace or favour, but by the necessity of their work,—that is what everybody here refuses to understand or believe, but it is the fact: that nearness acts automatically as a pressure, if for nothing else, to adapt their consciousness to hers which means change, but it is difficult for them because the difference between the two consciousnesses is enormous especially on the physical level and it is on the physical level that they are meeting her in the work.

27-4-1944

(9)

Q: Is it not true that those who are bodily nearest to the Mother are allowed that privilege because they are open to her, one with her will and close to her in their inner being? Is it not also a fact that there are special advantages in being bodily near to the Mother?

A: It is not so easy to be "one with the will" of the Mother or to be entirely open. To be bodily close imposes a constant pressure for progress, for perfection, which no one yet has been able to meet.

People have mental ideas in this matter which are not true.

A's demand was to live inside or have free access (to the Mother's rooms) at all times (which is not allowed to anybody, neither to B or C nor anyone else) and to be on an equality with or superiority over those who were admitted. Such a demand shows a total ignorance of the reasons which are behind the admission (it has nothing to do with special grace or favour) and also of the fitness of things. If she had been allowed, she would not have been able to bear it even for a few days. B and C are different—they have special work to do which makes it necessary for them to come close to the Mother or see her often. It has nothing at all to do with any superiority in sadhana, as you have yourself pointed out by quoting the examples of D etc."

7-3-1935

(10)

What I meant was not that bodily closeness is important but that it is not easily bearable. The touch at Pranam and bodily closeness do not mean the same thing. By bodily closeness I meant living

with the Mother or in frequent physical contact with her....As for bearing the closeness, most people do that usually by shutting themselves as much as possible to the pressure,—when they can't do that they get upset by it. That is the whole fact of the matter.

5-8-1935

(II)

I am afraid all these are mental constructions. You are constructing in your mind what X ought to feel. But as a matter of fact neither X's nor anybody's difficulties are removed by their coming to Mother or by their sitting an hour or two hours or even three hours with her. Plenty of people have done that and gone away as glum, desperate and revolted as they came. Among the people who see the Mother are some who have crises as bad as yours and as frequent. It is also not true that those who have talked much with Mother (about houses, repairs, servants, etc.) understood her better. In former days some people used to see much of Mother in another way, i.e., to talk with her on all sorts of subjects—but even those did not really understand her. I repeat that all that is mental building and constructed inference and does not

square with the facts. It is only when one is inwardly open to her that one profits by the "contact" with her, not the physical but the spiritual or inner contact, and then the mere thought of her or a mere thought from her can set right anything wrong; then the physical contact also can help, but it is not indispensable. And as for understanding her, it is only by entering into the spiritual consciousness that one can understand her, or if not understand in the mind, at least feel and respond to what she is through an increasing oneness.

4-8-1935

(12)

It would be most foolish to call back this meaningless delusion—for nothing can be farther from the actual and practical truth than to suppose that those who are in physical nearness to the Mother or have frequent physical approach are happier or more satisfied than others—it is not in the least true—or to allow it to prevent the progress of the inner peace. If you would only get rid of this delusion, nothing would be able to prevent the growth of the Peace and that inner nearness which alone makes

people in this Ashram divinely happy. Happiness comes from the soul's satisfaction, not from the vital's or the body's. The vital is never satisfied; the body soon ceases to be moved at all by what it easily or always has. Only the psychic being brings the real joy and felicity.

8-9-1934

The Inner and the Outer Contact

(1)

Let the inner contact with the Mother increase—unless that is there, the outer contacts if too much multiplied easily degenerate into a routine.

(2)

I mean the inner contact in which one either feels one with her or in contact with her or aware of her presence or at the very least turned towards her always.

16-3-1935

(3)

Q: "Today I had an intense desire to go in the Mother's rooms upstairs so as to be near and close to her.

A: But the coming near to the Mother should be in the inner rooms, not the outer. For in the inner rooms one can always enter and even arrange to stay there permanently.

8-3-1935

The Mother's Love

(1)

You are the Mother's child and the Mother's love to her children is without limit and she bears patiently with the defects of their nature. Try to be the true child of the Mother: it is there within you, but your outward mind is occupied by little futile things and too often in a violent fuss over them. You must not only see the Mother in dream but learn to see and feel her with you and within

you at all times. Then you will find it easier to control yourself and change,—for she being there would be able to do it for you.

(2)

As for the feelings about the Mother and that her love is only given for a return in work or to those who can do sadhana well, that is the usual senseless idea of the vital-physical mind and has no value.

17-1-1937

(3)

Certainly, it is not necessary for you to become “good” in order that the Mother may give you her love. Her love is always there and the imperfections of human nature do not count against that love. The only thing is that you must become aware of it always there. For that it is necessary for the psychic to come in front—for the psychic knows, while the mind, vital and physical look only at surface appearances and misinterpret them.

24-6-1936

(4)

Obviously, if people expect the ordinary kind of love from the Mother they must be disappointed—the love based on the vital and its moods. But that is just the kind of love that has to be overpassed in Yoga or transformed into something else.

14-3-1936

(5)

All that is quite correct. Even the human or the psychic love (of the Mother) many are unable to feel or understand because it is not quite in the ordinary human way. •

5-5-1935

(6)

But why do you want to meet her as a “human” Mother? If you can see the Divine Mother in a human body that should be enough and a more fruitful attitude. Those who approach her as a

human Mother often get into trouble by their conception making all sorts of mistakes in their approach to her.

2-5-1934

True Love for the Mother

(I)

The love which is turned towards the Divine ought not to be the usual vital feeling which men call by that name; for that is not love, but only a vital desire, an instinct of appropriation, the impulse to possess and monopolise. Not only is this not the divine Love, but it ought not to be allowed to mix in the least degree in the Yoga. The true love for the Divine is self-giving, free of demand, full of submission and surrender; it makes no claim, imposes no condition, strikes no bargain, indulges in no violences of jealousy or pride or anger—for these things are not in its composition. In return the Divine Mother also gives herself, but freely—and this represents itself in an inner giving—her presence in your mind, your vital, your physical consciousness, her power re-creating you in the divine nature, taking up all the movements of your

being and directing them towards perfection and fulfilment, her love enveloping you and carrying you in its arms Godwards. It is this that you must aspire to feel and possess in all your parts down to the very material, and here there is no limitation either of time or of completeness. If one truly aspires and gets it, there ought to be no room for any other claim or any other disappointed desire. And if one truly aspires, one does unfailingly get it, more and more as the purification proceeds and the nature undergoes its needed change.

Keep your love pure of all selfish claim and desire; you will find that you are getting all the love that you can bear and absorb in answer.

(2)

X is probably making two mistakes—first, expecting outward expressions of love from the Mother; second, looking for progress instead of concentrating on openness and surrender without demand of a return. These are two mistakes which sadhaks are constantly making. If one opens, if one surrenders, then as soon as the nature is ready, progress will come of itself; but the personal concentration for progress brings difficulties and resis-

tance and disappointment because the mind is not looking at things from the right angle. The Mother has a special kindness for X and every day, at Pranam she is trying to put a sustaining force upon him. He must learn to be very quiet in mind and vital and consecrate himself so that he may become conscious as well as receive. The Divine Love, unlike the human, is deep and vast and silent; one must become quiet and wide to be aware of it and reply to it. He must make it his whole object to be surrendered so that he may become a vessel and instrument—leaving it to the Divine Wisdom and Love to fill him with what is needed. Let him also fix this in the mind not to insist that in a given time he must progress, develop, get realisations—whatever time it takes, he must be prepared to wait and persevere and make his whole life an aspiration and an opening for the one thing only, the Divine. To give oneself is the secret of sadhana, not to demand and acquire a thing. The more one gives oneself, the more the power to receive will grow. But for that all impatience and revolt must go; all suggestions of not getting, not being helped, not being loved, going away, of abandoning life or the spiritual endeavour must be rejected.

Psychic, Mental and Vital Devotion

(1)

Q: What is the difference between psychic devotion, mental devotion and vital devotion for the Mother?

A: The psychic is made up of love and self-giving without demand, the vital of the will to be possessed by the Mother and serve her, the mental of faith and unquestioning acceptance of all that the Mother is, says and does. These, however, are outside signs—it is in inner character quite recognizable but not to be put into words that they differ.

28-4-1933

(2)

Q: Is there no place for mental and vital devotion in this Yoga?

A: Who says there is not? So long as it is real devotion, all bhakti has a place.

28-4-1933

Psychic Feeling for the Mother

(1)

Q: What kind of feeling is that which gets satisfaction and joy only in seeing the Mother?

A: It is psychic.

(2)

Q: What kind of feeling is that which gets satisfaction and joy only in remembering the Mother?

A: Psychic.

(3)

Q: What kind of feeling is that which gives a wound in the heart on hearing anything against the Mother?

A: Psychic.

(4)

Q: What kind of feeling is that by which one feels close to the Mother's presence in the heart even though she is physically far?

A: Psychic.

(5)

Q: How shall I find out that I am in the full state of psychic love?

A: By the absence of ego, by pure devotion, by submission and surrender to the Divine.

9-5-1933

Real Love and Egoism

Q: We all want the Mother's love but I wonder how many of us really love the Mother. Most of us live in our own likes and dislikes, joys and miseries, satisfactions and disappointments but hardly anyone has real love for the Mother.

A: It does not mean that there is no love, but that the love is mixed up and covered with egoism, demand and vital movements. At least that is the case with many. There are some, of course, who have no love at all or "love"—if it can be called so—only for what they get, one or two who love truly, but in a great many there is a psychic spark hidden in much smoke. The smoke has to be got rid of

so that the spark may have a chance of growing into a blaze.

9-11-1934

Faith and Love

Q: Is it not true that those who have faith in the Mother have also love for her? Do not faith and love go together?

A: Not always. There are plenty of people who have some faith without love, though they may have a certain kind of mental bhakti, and plenty who have some love but no faith. But if it is the true psychic love, then faith goes with it, and if there is the entire faith, then the psychic love becomes soon awake. What you say is right if it is the soul's faith, the soul's love—but in some there is only a vital feeling and that brings, when it is disappointed, revolt and anger and they go away.

8-5-1933

Psychic and Vital Love

(1)

Love and devotion depend on the opening of the

psychic and for that the desires must go. The vital love offered by many to the Mother instead of the psychic love brings more disturbance than anything else because it is coupled with desire.

8-9-1936

(2)

There is no harm in the vital love provided it is purified of all insincerity (as, for example, self-importance etc.) and from all demand. To feel joy in seeing the Mother is all right, but to demand it as a right, to be upset or in revolt or *abhimān* when it is not given, to be jealous of others who get it—all that is demand and creates an impurity which spoils both the joy and the love.

13-9-1934

(3)

If you have no *abhimān* against the Mother, that also is surely very desirable. *Abhimān*, disturbance, etc. may be signs of life but of a vital, not of the inner

life. They must quiet down and give room for the inner life. At first the result may be a neutral quiet, but one has often to pass through that to arrive at a more positive new consciousness.

2-1-1937

(4)

It will not do to indulge this restless vital movement. It is not by that that you can have the union with the Mother. You should aspire calmly—eat, sleep, do your work. Peace is the one thing you have to ask for now—it is only on the basis of peace and calm that the true progress and realisation can come. There must be no vital excitement in your seeking or your aspiration towards the Mother.

20-10-1933

Vital Bargaining and True Self-giving

(1)

What you have felt is a revival or return on you of the lower vital with its demands and desires. Its

suggestion is, "I am doing the Yoga, but for a price. I have abandoned the life of vital desire and satisfaction but in order to get intimacy with the Mother—instead of satisfying myself with the world, to satisfy myself and get my desires fulfilled by the Divine. If I do not get the intimacy of the Mother and immediately and as I want it, why should I give up the old things?" And as a natural result the old things start again—"X and Y and Y and X and the wrongs of Z." You must see this machinery of the lower vital and dismiss it. It is only by the full psychic relation of self-giving that unity and closeness with the Divine can be maintained—the other is part of the vital ego movement and can only bring a fall of the consciousness and disturbance.

29-6-1933

(2)

You are concerned only with yourself and the Divine. In your relations with the Divine you are concerned not with the Divine's satisfaction of your personal desires, but with being pulled out of these things and raised to your highest spiritual possibilities so that you may become united with the Mother within and as a result in the outer being

also. That cannot be done by satisfying your vital desires—to do so would only increase them and give you into the hands of the ignorance and restless confusion of the ordinary nature. It can be done only by your inner trust and surrender and by the pressure of the Mother's peace and force working from within and changing your vital nature. It is when you forget this that you go wrong and suffer: when you remember it you progress and the difficulties become less and less.

13-9-1933.

(3)

If it is the same part of the vital that was on the right side and has now turned against the Mother, the explanation is very obvious. It gave its adhesion formerly because it thought that by its adhesion it could make her satisfy its desires; finding its desires not indulged, it turns against her. That is the usual vital movement in ordinary man and in ordinary life, and it has no true place in Yoga. It was just the introduction of this attitude into Yoga by the sadhaks and its persistence which has at last made it necessary for the Mother to draw back as she

has done. What you have to do is to get these lower parts to understand that they exist not for themselves but for the Divine and to give their adhesion, without claim or *arrière pensée* or subterfuge. It is the whole issue at the present moment in the sadhana; for it is only if this is done that the physical consciousness can change and become fit for the descent. Otherwise there will always be these ups and downs in some part of the being—at least, delay, confusion and disorder. This is the only true basis for fixity in the true consciousness and for a smooth course in the sadhana.

14-12-1931

•(4)

X has a rajasic nature for which such rules would be very dangerous as it might be made a justification for throwing all his desires, rajasic claiming, anger, jealousy, grievances of many kinds on the Mother. What he needs is to insist on his self-purification in becoming calm, peaceful, pure, surrendered; for it is only when he is so that he will be able to receive the full pressure of the Mother's presence. The relation between the Mother and the sadhaks cannot

be the same for all, it must be different for different natures.

Obstacle of Fear in Intimacy with the Mother

(I)

All fear ought to be cast out. This movement of fear belongs to a still unchanged part of the vital which answers to the old ideas, feelings and reactions. Its only effect is to make you misinterpret the Mother's attitude or the intention in her words or looks or expression. If the Mother becomes serious or has ironic smile, that does not in the least mean that she is angry or has withdrawn her affection; on the contrary, it is with those with whom she is most inwardly intimate that she feels most free to become like that—even to give them severe chidings. They in their turn understand her and do not get upset or afraid,—they only turn to look inside themselves and see what it is on which she is putting her pressure. That pressure they regard as a privilege and a sign of her Grace. Fear stands in the way of this complete intimacy and confidence and creates only misunderstanding; you must cast it out altogether.

22-5-1932

(2)

There is no need to ask for pardon, for the Mother has not in the least been angry or displeased with you. You may be sure of her love always.

29-9-1933

(3)

It is always a mistake to attach importance to what others say—it is enough to have true devotion and the right attitude towards the Mother. You need have no apprehension of this kind at all.

28-4-1933

*Three Rules for Remaining Open
to the Mother*

Nothing is more dangerous than the influences of the physical mind trying to build up conclusions upon outward appearances—they have nine chances out of ten of being false. One must learn to distrust hasty conclusions from surface appearances—is not that the first condition of true knowledge?—and learn to see and know things from within.

You ask, how to stop these movements? To begin with, observe three rules:

(1) Keep always confidence in the Mother's care and love—trust in them and distrust every suggestion, every appearance that seems to contradict.

(2) Reject immediately every feeling, every impulse that makes you draw back from the Mother—from your true relation with her, from inner nearness, from a simple and straightforward confidence in her.

(3) Do not lay too much stress on outward signs—your observation of them may easily mislead you. Keep yourself open to her and feel with your heart,—the inner heart, not the surface vital desire, but the heart of the true emotion,—there you are more likely to find her and be always near her in yourself and receive what constantly she is working to give you.

1931

Entire Self-giving to the Mother-Power

The whole principle of this Yoga is to give oneself entirely to the Divine alone and to nobody and nothing else, and to bring down into ourselves by

union with the Divine Mother-Power all the transcendent light, force, wideness, peace, purity, truth-consciousness and Ananda of the supramental Divine. In this Yoga, therefore, there can be no place for vital relations or interchanges with others; any such relation or interchange immediately ties down the soul to the lower consciousness and its lower nature, prevents the true and full union with the Divine and hampers both the ascent to the supramental Truth-consciousness and the descent of the supramental Ishwari Shakti.

VIII

THE MOTHER AND THE WORKING OF THE ASHRAM

The Mother's Sadhana in the Sadhaks

(1)

Naturally, the Mother does the sadhana in each sadhak—only it is conditioned by their zeal and their receptivity.

4-1-1935

(2)

The Mother has her own experience in bringing down the things that have to be brought down—but what the sadhaks experience she had long ago. The Divine does the sadhana first for the world and then in others.

12-9-1934

(3)

I have said that the Divine does the sadhana first for the world and then gives what is brought down to others. There can be no sadhana without realisations and experiences. The *Prayers*¹ are a record of Mother's experiences.

4-1-1935

The Mother's Offer of Truth

The Mother cannot decide for you whether you should follow the Path of Nirvikalpa Samadhi or accept this Yoga, she can only offer to you the Truth and if you accept it, guide you towards it.

8-9-1933

The Mother and the Yoga of Knowledge

Why should Mother dislike Yoga of Knowledge? The realisation of Self and of the Cosmic being (without which the realisation of Self is incomplete)

¹ *Prayers and Meditations of the Mother*

are essential steps in our Yoga; it is the end of other Yogas, but it is, as it were, the beginning of ours, that is to say, the point where its own characteristic realisation can commence.

26-3-1936

Decision to Join the Ashram

There should be no desire or anxiety in your mind to get these people or others to come here. These things ought to be decided on one side by their call and fitness and on the other by the will of the Mother.

28-6-1936

Period of Probation

Well, it is better not to write anything too positive. Nowadays, especially, the Mother takes people in such circumstances on probation, she does not give them large immediate assurances, but waits to see how they open. If he justifies his aspiration all will be well.

26-2-1943

Choice from Within

It is not possible for the Mother to tell you to remain, if you are yourself in your mind and vital eager to go. It is from within yourself that there must come the clear will on one side or the other.

24-2-1932

Acceptance by the Mother

(1)

Q: When a person begins to do Yoga under the Mother's care, is he not fully taken up by her?

A: Not until he is ready. He has first to accept her and then to give up more and more his ego. There are sadhaks who at every step revolt, oppose the Mother, contradict her will, criticise her decisions. How can she take them up fully in such conditions?

21-6-1933

(2)

I wrote the general law of spiritual life and obedience. You have to know that, as well as its special application here. Moreover, many here are

satisfied with saying "the Mother is divine", but they do not follow her commands—others do not really regard her as Divine—they treat her as if she were an ordinary Guru. I have said what obedience means in Yoga, nothing more can be said than that.

Reasons of Sadhaks Going Away from the Mother

(I)

What you have written is quite correct. To say that the Divine is defeated when a sadhak goes away is an absurdity. If the sadhak allows his lower nature to get the better of him, it is his defeat, not the Divine's. The sadhak comes here not because the Divine has need of him, but because he has need of the Divine. If he carries out the conditions of the spiritual life and gives himself to the Mother's leading, he will attain his goal, but if he wants to lay down his own conditions and impose his own ideas and his own desires on the Divine, then all the difficulty comes. That is what happened to X and Y and several others. Because the Divine does not yield to them they go away; but how is that a defeat for the Divine?

27-5-1937

(2)

Q: How is it that some who come to the Mother with a clear aspiration and call go away from her after some time? What is it that takes them away?

A: Through the suggestions of the hostile forces, because of pride, egoism, ambition, sexual desire, vanity, greed or any other vital impulse urged by the hostile Powers.

(3)

Q: Are the vital forces so strong that in spite of a clear aspiration and Divine call in a person they can draw him away from the Mother?

A: Every man is free at every moment to consent to the Divine call or not to consent, to follow the lower nature or to follow his soul.

(4)

Q: Does their leaving the path not mean that they were unable to judge by their knowledge whether their call for the Divine was true or not?

A: All this about judging is nonsense. You feel the call or you do not and if you feel the call, you follow it without calculating or counting risks or asking whether you are fit or not.

(5)

Q: When people strongly feel the urge to leave the sadhana and go away from the Mother, what is the best way for them to counteract this urge and stick on to the Mother?

A: By understanding that it is the Devil who tempts them and not listening to the Devil.

(6)

Q: Can those sadhaks, who have lived in the Ashram for many years, forget the Mother's Grace after leaving it?

A: Some of them seem to forget.

(7)

Q: Is there any possibility of their returning to do the sadhana under the Mother?

A: It depends on the person.

6-9-1933

(8)

When the psychic being has been once fully awake, then it is not possible for the sadhak to revolt and go away; for if he does, he leaves his soul behind with the Mother and it is only the outer being that lives for a while elsewhere. But that is too painful a condition; one has either to come back or life becomes hardly worth living.

20-11-1935

Spiritual Possibility due to the Mother's Presence

(1)

Certainly very few seem to realise what a possibility has been given them here—all has been turned into an opportunity for the bubbling of the vital or the tamas of the physical rather than used for the intended psychic and spiritual purpose.

7-3-1936

(2)

I was not speaking of any particular thing—but the whole spiritual possibility due to the Mother's presence here. Very few realise what that means and even those who have some idea of it take little advantage and allow their lower nature to block the progress.

9-3-1936

*Two Foundations of the Ashram's
Material Life*

There are only two possible foundations for the material life here. One is that one is a member of an Ashram founded on the principle of self-giving and surrender. One belongs to the Divine and all one has belongs to the Divine; in giving one gives not what is one's own but what already belongs to the Divine. There is no question of payment or return, no bargain, no room for demand and desire. The Mother is in sole charge and arranges things as best they can be arranged within the means at her disposal and the capacities of her instruments. She is under no obligation to act according to the mental standards or vital desires and claims of the sadhaks;

she is not obliged to use a democratic equality in her dealings with them. She is free to deal with each according to what she sees to be his true need or what is best for him in his spiritual progress. No one can be her judge or impose on her his own rule and standard; she alone can make rules, and she can depart from them too if she thinks fit, but no one can demand that she shall do so. Personal demands and desires cannot be imposed on her. If anyone has what he finds to be a real need or a suggestion to make which is within the province assigned to him, he can do so; but if she gives no sanction, he must remain satisfied and drop the matter. This is the spiritual discipline of which the one who represents or embodies the Divine Truth is the centre. Either she is that and all this is the plain common sense of the matter; or she is not and then no one need stay here. Each can go his own way and there is no Ashram and no Yoga.

II-4-1930

The Mother's Way of Action and Waste

I did not consider it necessary to say anything about the question of waste beyond assuring you

that the undertaking of useless and unnecessary work only in order to keep the men employed was no part of the Mother's principle of action. The Mother did not know to what pipe you referred and had no time or inclination to make enquiries about it. It is quite true that, so long at least as the sadhaks are not siddha Yogis, self-control is the law; they have to learn to refrain from indulgence of excess in any direction—the provision made for them being ample for a sadhak and much more than is allowed elsewhere—and from negligence, greed or the pursuit of individual fancy. When they do these things, the Mother does not intervene at every moment to check them; a standard has been set, they have been warned against waste, a framework has been created, for the rest they are expected to learn and grow out of their weaknesses by their own consciousness and will with the Mother's inner force to aid them. In the organisation of work there was formerly a formidable waste due to the workers and sadhaks following their own fancy almost entirely without respect for the Mother's will; that was largely checked by reorganisation. But waste to a certain extent continues and is almost inevitable so long as the sadhaks and workers are imperfect in their will and consciousness, do not follow in spirit or detail the Mother's recommendations or think

themselves wiser than herself and make undue room for their "independent" ideas. Here, too, the Mother does not always insist, she watches and observes, intervenes outwardly more than in the individual lives of the sadhaks, but still leaves room for them to grow by consciousness and experience and the lesson of their own mistakes and often employs an inner in preference to an outer pressure. In these matters she must exercise her own judgment and vision and there is no use in anybody offering his approval or censure—for she works from a different centre of vision than theirs and they have not a superior light by which they can judge or guide her.

Whether in work or in Yoga the Mother acts not from the mind or from the level of consciousness from which these criticisms arise, but from quite another vision and consciousness. It is perfectly useless, therefore, and it is inconsistent with the position she ought to occupy, to accept the ordinary mind and consciousness as judge and tribunal and allow her to appear before it and defend her. Such a procedure is itself illogical and inconsequent and can lead nowhere; it can only create or prolong a false atmosphere wholly inimical to success in the sadhana. For that reason, if these doubts are raised, I no longer answer them or answer in such a way

as to discourage a repetition of any such challenge. If people want to understand why the Mother does things, let them get into the same inner consciousness from which she sees and acts. As to what she is, that also can only be seen either with the eye of faith or of a deeper vision. That, too, is the reason why we keep here people who have not yet acquired the necessary faith or vision; we leave them to acquire it from within, as they will do if their will of sadhana is sincere.

26-12-1936

The Mother and the Ashram's Discipline

(1)*

He said, according to X, that the absence of discipline was the great bane in India; neither individuals nor groups had any discipline. Then why did he weep merely because he was not allowed to put his hand-bag in a place not intended for it? I do not agree myself with him in the idea that there is perfect discipline in the Ashram; on the contrary, there is a great lack of it, much indiscipline, quarrelling and self-assertion. What there is is organisation

and order which the Mother has been able to establish and maintain in spite of all that. That organisation and order is necessary for all collective work; it has been an object of admiration and surprise for all from outside who have observed the Ashram; it is the reason why the Ashram has been able to survive and outlive the malignant attacks of many people who would otherwise have got it dissolved long ago. The Mother knew very well what she was doing and what was necessary for the work she has to do.

Discipline itself is not something especially Western; in Oriental countries like Japan, China and India it was at one time all-regulating and supported by severe sanctions in a way that Westerners would not tolerate. Socially whatever objections we may make to it, it is a fact that it preserved Hindu religion and Hindu society through the ages and through all vicissitudes. In the political field there was, on the contrary, indiscipline, individualism and strife; that is one reason why India collapsed and entered into servitude. Organisation and order were attempted but failed to endure. Even in the spiritual life India has had not only the free wandering ascetic, a law to himself, but has felt impelled to create orders of Sannyasins with their rules and governing bodies and there have also been monastic institutions with a

strict discipline. Since no work can be done successfully without these things—even the individual worker, the artist for instance, has to go through a severe discipline in order to become efficient—why should the Mother be held to blame if she insists on discipline in the exceedingly difficult work she has put in her charge?

I don't see on what ground you expect order and organisation to be carried on without rules and without discipline. You seem to say that people should be allowed complete freedom with only such discipline as they choose to impose upon themselves; that might do if the only thing to be done were for each individual to get some inner realisation and life did not matter or if there were no collective life or work or none that had any importance. But this is not the case here. We have undertaken a work which includes life and action and the physical world. In what I am trying to do, the spiritual realisation is the first necessity, but it cannot be complete without an outer realisation also in life, in men, in this world. Spiritual consciousness within but also spiritual life without. The Ashram as it is now is not that ideal, for that all its members have to live in a spiritual consciousness and not in the ordinary egoistic mind and mainly rajasic vital nature. But, all the same, the Ashram is a first form which our effort

has taken, a field in which the preparatory work has to be done. The Mother has to maintain it and for that all this order and organisation has to be there and it cannot be done without rules and discipline. Discipline is even necessary for the overcoming of the ego and the mental preferences and the rajasic vital nature, as a help to it at any rate. If these were overcome outward rules etc. would be less necessary; spontaneous agreement, unity, harmony and spontaneous right action might take its place. But while the present state of things exists, by the abandonment or leaving out of discipline except such as people choose or not choose to impose upon themselves, the result would be failure and disaster.On that principle the work also would have gone to pot, there would have been nothing but strife, assertion by each worker of his own idea and self-will and constant clashes; even as it is, that has abounded and it is only the Mother's authority, the frame of work she has given and her skill in getting incompatibilities to act together that has kept things going.

I do not find that Mother is a rigid disciplinarian. On the contrary, I have seen with what a constant leniency, tolerant patience and kindness she has met the huge mass of indiscipline, disobedience, self-assertion, revolt that has surrounded her, even

revolt to her very face and violent letters overwhelming her with the worst kind of vituperation. A rigid disciplinarian would not have treated these things like that.

I do not know what ill-treatment visitors have received, apart from the insistence on rules of which you complain; but it cannot be a general complaint, otherwise the number of visitors would not be constantly increasing nor would so many people want to come back again or even come every time or so many want to stay on if the Mother allowed them. After all, they do not come here on the basis of a social occasion but for Darshan of those whom they regard to be spiritually great or, in the case of constant visitors, for a share in the life of the Ashram and for spiritual advantage, and for both of these motives one would expect them to submit willingly to the conditions imposed and not to mind a little inconvenience.

As regards Golconde and its rules—they are not imposed elsewhere—there is a reason for them and they are not imposed for nothing. In Golconde Mother has worked out her own idea through Raymond, Sammer and others. First, Mother believes in beauty as a part of spirituality and divine living; secondly, she believes that physical things have the Divine Consciousness underlying them

as much as living things; and thirdly that they have an individuality of their own and ought to be properly treated, used in the right way, not misused or improperly handled or hurt or neglected so that they perish soon and lose their full beauty or value; she feels the consciousness in them and is so much in sympathy with them that what in other hands may be spoilt or wasted in a short time last with her for years or decades. It is on this basis that she planned the Golconde. First, she wanted a high architectural beauty, and in this she succeeded—architects and people with architectural knowledge have admired it with enthusiasm as a remarkable achievement; one spoke of it as the finest building of its kind he had seen, with no equal in all Europe or America; and a French architect, pupil of a great master, said it executed superbly the idea which his master had been seeking for but failed to realise; but also she wanted all the objects in it, the rooms, the fitting, the furniture to be individually artistic and to form a harmonious whole. This, too, was done with great care. Moreover, each thing was arranged to have its own use, for each thing there was a place, and there should be no mixing up, or confused or wrong use. But all this had to be kept up and carried out in practice; for it was easy for people living there to create a complete confusion

and misuse and to bring everything to disorder and ruination in a short time. That was why the rules were made and for no other purpose. The Mother hoped that if right people were accommodated there or others trained to a less rough and ready living than is common, her idea could be preserved and the wasting of all the labour and expense avoided.

Unfortunately, the crisis of accommodation came and we were forced to house people in Golconde who could not be accommodated elsewhere and a careful choice could not be made. So, often there was damage and misuse and the Mother had to spend 200/300 Rupees after Darshan to repair things and restore what had been realised. X has taken the responsibility of the house and of keeping things right as much as possible. That was why she interfered in the hand-bag affair—it was as much a tragedy for the table as for the doctor, for it got scratched and spoiled by the hand-bag—and tried to keep both the bag and shaving utensils in the places that had been assigned for them. If I had been in the doctor's place, I would have been grateful to her for her care and solicitude instead of being upset by what ought to have been for him trifles, although, because of her responsibility, they had for her their importance. Anyhow, this is the

rationale for the rules and they do not seem to me to be meaningless regulation and discipline.

Finally, about financial arrangements. It has been an arduous and trying work for the Mother and myself to keep up this Ashram, with its ever-increasing numbers, to make both ends meet and at times to prevent deficit budgets and their results; specially in this war time, when the expenses have climbed to a dizzy and fantastic height, only one accustomed to these things or who had similar responsibilities can understand what we have gone through. Carrying on anything of this magnitude without any settled income could not have been done if there had not been the working of a divine Force. Works of charity are not part of our work, there are other people who can see to that. We have to spend all on the work we have taken in hand and what we get is nothing compared to what is needed. We cannot undertake things that would bring in money in the ordinary ways. We have to use whatever means are possible. There is no general rule that spiritual men must do works of charity or they should receive and care for whatever visitors come or house and feed them. If we do it, it is because it has become part of our work. The Mother charges visitors for accommodation and food because she has expenses to meet and cannot make money out

of air; she charges in fact less than her expense. It is quite natural that she should not like people to take advantage of her and allow those who try to take meals in the Dining Room under false pretences; even if they are a few at first, yet if this were allowed, a few would soon become a legion. As for people being allowed to come in freely for Darshan without permission, which would soon convert me into a thing for show and an object of curiosity, often critical or hostile curiosity, it is I who would be the first to cry "stop".

I have tried to explain our standpoint and have gone to some length to do it. Whether it is agreed with or not, at any rate it is a standpoint and I think a rational one. I am writing only on the surface and I do not speak of what is behind or from the Yogic standpoint, the standpoint of the Yogic consciousness from which we act; that would be more difficult to express. This is merely for intellectual satisfaction and there there is always room for dispute.

25-2-1945

(2)

It is very true that physical things have a consciousness within them which feels and responds to

care and is sensitive to careless touch and rough handling. To know or feel that and learn to be careful of them is a great progress of consciousness. It is always so that the Mother has felt and dealt with physical things and they remain with her much longer and in a better condition than with others and give their full use.

16-4-1936

(3)

The Mother has never objected to people who "cannot pay" residing or visiting the Ashram without paying; she expects payment only from visitors who can pay. She did object strongly to the action of some rich visitors (on one occasion) who came here, spent money lavishly on purchases etc. and went off without giving anything to the Ashram or even the smallest offering to the Mother—that is all.

21-10-1943

Necessity of Departmental Heads

(1)

It is not physically possible for the Mother to

give the work direct to each worker and exercise a direct control, so that physically as well as inwardly he may offer it to her. For every department there must be a head who consults her in all important matters and reports everything to her, but in minor matters he need not always come for a previous decision—that is not possible. X is there in the Building Department as the head because he is a qualified engineer. That is a necessity of outward organisation which is unavoidable here as elsewhere and has to be accepted if the work is to be done. But it does not mean that X or any other head is to be considered as a superior person or that one has to surrender to his ego. One has to get rid of his own ego as far as possible and regard the work done under whatever conditions as an offering to the Mother.

20-8-1936

(2)

It is quite impossible for the Mother to see to every detail of the organisation of the Ashram in person; even as it is, she has no time free at all. It is understood that you can have..., but it is with

those who have charge that you must insist on the execution of any arrangement.

20-7-1933

(3)

It was the Mother who selected the heads (of departments) for her purpose in order to organise the whole; all the lines of the work, all the details were arranged by her and the heads trained to observe her methods and it was only afterwards that she stepped back and let the whole thing go on on her lines but with a watchful eye always. The heads are carrying out her policy and instructions and report everything to her and she often modifies what they do when she thinks fit. Their action is not perfect, because they themselves are not yet perfect and they are also hampered by the ego of the workers and the sadhaks. But nothing can be perfect so long as the sadhaks and workers do not come to the realisation that they are not here for their ego and self-indulgence of their vital and physical demands but for a high and exacting Yoga of which the first aim is the destruction of desire and the substitution for it of the Divine Truth and the Divine Will.

9-1-1936

*Need of Learning Subordination and
Cooperation*

(I)

The Mother has her own reasons for her decisions; she has to look at the work as a whole without regard to one department or branch alone and with a view to the necessities of the work and the management. Whatever work is done here, one has always to learn to subordinate or put aside one's own ideas and preferences about things concerning it and work for the best under the conditions and decisions laid down by her. This is one of the main difficulties throughout the Ashram, as each worker wants to do according to his own ideas, on his own lines according to what he thinks to be the right or convenient thing and expects that to be sanctioned. It is one of the principal reasons of difficulty, clash or disorder in the work, creating conflict between the workers themselves, conflict between the workers and the heads of departments, conflict between the idea of the sadhaks and the will of the Mother. Harmony can only exist if all accept the will of the Mother without grudge and personal reaction.

Independent work does not exist in the Ashram. All is organised and interrelated, neither the heads

of departments nor the workers are independent. To learn subordination and cooperation is necessary for all collective work; without it there will be chaos.

10-3-1936

(2)

It is impossible for the Mother to arrange the work according to personal considerations as then all work would become impossible.

25-7-1934

Important Points for Working in the Right Spirit

There are certain things that A must fix in his mind and feel and act in their spirit, if he is to get rid of his depression and unrest and feel happy and at home. You will explain clearly to him what I write here.

(1) He is not here as B's nephew, but as a child of the Mother.

(2) He is not here under the care, guardianship and control of B, but under the Mother's control and care and he owes allegiance to her alone.

(3) The work given to him in the stores is the Mother's work and not B's; he must do it with that idea, as the Mother's work, and no other.

(4) B is at the head of the stores, garden, granary and receives his directions from the Mother or reports his arrangements to her for approval—just as C in the B. D. or D in the Dining Room or E or F in their departments. Others in these departments are supposed to receive their directions from the head and act in accordance. But this is because it is necessary for the discipline and good order of the work; it does not mean that the work is B's or the building work is C's or the dining room work is D's—all is the Mother's work and must be done by each, by the head as by the others, for her. It would not be possible to get the work done if each and every worker insisted on being independent and directly responsible to her or on doing things in his own way; there is too much of this spirit and it is the cause of much confusion and disorder. The Mother cannot see to the whole work herself physically and give orders direct to each worker;

therefore the arrangement made is indispensable. On the other hand, the head of a department is also supposed to act according to the Mother's directions—or in their spirit when he is left free—and not otherwise; if he does according to his mere fancy or obeys his own personal likes and dislikes or misuses his trust for his personal satisfaction or convenience, he is answerable for any failure in the work that may result or wrong spirit or clash or confusion or false atmosphere.

(5) Any work done personally for B or another (not for the Ashram) is not part of the Mother's work and the Mother has nothing to do with that; if such work is asked, A may do it if he likes or not do it if he thinks it improper.

(6) A has been given one work at least by the Mother direct—that is the cleaning of the kitchen vessels. Let him do it according to the Mother's directions and with scrupulousness and perfection; it will be an opportunity for him to show what he can do and the rest can be seen to hereafter.

(7) He is not bound to accept food from G and B or presents etc; if he does not like it, why does he receive these things? He is perfectly free to

refuse. His staying here and everything else does not depend on B, but on the Mother alone—so he has no reason to fear.

(8) Finally, he should clear his vital of restlessness and desires—for that in him as in everybody is the root cause of depression and, if he were jelsewhere and under other circumstances, the depression would still come because the root cause would still be there. Here if he turns entirely to the Mother, opens to her and works and lives turning towards her, he will get release and happiness and grow into light and peace and become in all his being a child of the Divine.

19-3-1932

Work in the Ashram and the Mother's Work

Whose work is it if it is not the Mother's work?
All that you do, you have to do as the Mother's work.
All the work done in the Ashram is the Mother's.

All those works, meditation, reading "Conversations", studying English, etc. are good. You can do any of them dedicating them to the Mother.

Meditation means opening yourself to the Mother, concentrating on aspiration and calling in her force to work and transform you.

18-9-1932

The Mother's Reasons for Allowing Work

Yes, that is correct. Mother does not care for the food for itself; but she allows X to do it as an offering. So with the work—although the work has its own importance. Y and Z are not given physical or practical external work because their energy cannot run in that direction and they cannot do it—not because training in physical and practical work is not good for all. In ideal circumstances a many-sided activity of the being would be the best—but as yet it is not always practicable.

26-9-1933

Kartavyam Karma and Work Sanctioned by the Mother

(1)

Q: Can it be said that all the work sanctioned by the Mother is "Kartavyam karma"?

A: If the sadhak has a strong insistence or a strong desire, the Mother may say "Yes" or "Do as you like" or give her sanction to the thing requested or demanded. That does not make it a "*Kartavyam karma*", but simply a thing which the sadhak can do. Again if a thing is indifferent or unobjectionable and the Mother is asked by somebody if he can do it, and she agrees, that does not exalt it into a "*Kartavyam karma*".

31-7-1937

(2)

Q: So far I had the belief that all work sanctioned by the Mother was her work and work done for her is our "*Kartavyam karma*". Is this not so? If a person gives up all duties to his family, country and society and sincerely does work only for the Divine, as an offering to the Mother, is he not doing the Mother's work and is it not his "*Kartavyam karma*"? Outside it may be difficult to decide this, but here, under the living Presence of the Mother, is this not an assured fact? If not, then what is really meant by "*Kartavyam karma*"?

A: I was asked whether everything done that had the Mother's permission was not a "*Kartavyam*

karma". People ask for permission to a host of things dictated by various reasons—it does not follow that the Mother's permission to all these things are her dictates. What work is given by the Mother is her work—also whatever work is done with sincerity as an offering to the Mother is her work also—that goes without saying. But Karma covers all kinds of actions and not work only.

31-7-1937

•
•

*The Mother's Approval and Possibilities
of Success*

Approval or permission! People get it into their heads that they would like to do some music, because it is the fashion or because they like it so much and the Mother may tolerate it and say "All right, try". That does not mean they are predestined or doomed to be musicians—or poets or painters according to the case. Perhaps one of them who try may bloom, others drop off. X starts painting and shows only a fanciful dash at first, after a time he brings out remarkable work. Y does clever facile things; one day he begins to deepen and a possible painter in the

making outlines; others—well, they don't. But they can try—they will learn something about painting at least.

May, 1935

The Mother's Attitude to Errors

Q: From what Mother said yesterday it seems that one should attach little importance to one's errors in work and not mind or correct those of others. Also, since the material world is only one of the several worlds, only a small portion of the total manifestation, should we not attach very little importance to material things, material work and its details?

A: What Mother said was that she was perfectly aware of errors done in the work, but as she had to work out a certain Force in these things looking at them from an inner view-point, not with the external intellect, she found it often necessary to pass over imperfections and errors. This does not at all mean that the sadhak-worker has not to care whether there are errors in his work where he is responsible. If other sadhaks commit errors that is their responsibility, one can observe and avoid similar mis-

takes in oneself, but one sadhak cannot correct the errors of others unless that comes within his responsibility—each has to correct himself and his own defects and mistakes.

We are here in this material world and not in the others except by an inner connection. Also our life and action lie here, so it will not do to neglect the material world and things, though we should not be attached and bound to them by *āśakti* and desire. We have to acquire a knowledge of the nature and powers of other worlds (planes) so far as they are connected with this one and we can use them to help and uplift the action here. But still the field of action is here and not elsewhere.

21-8-1936

External Organisation and Inner Harmony

(I)

Mistakes come from people bringing their ego, their personal feeling (likes and dislikes), their sense of prestige or their convenience, pride, sense of possession, etc. into the work. The right way is to feel that the work is the Mother's—not only

yours, but the work of others—and to carry it out in such a spirit that there shall be general harmony. Harmony cannot be brought about by external organisation only, though a more and more perfect external organisation is necessary; inner harmony there must be or else there will always be clash and disorder.

(2)

Q: You have written "Harmony cannot be brought about by external organisation only....inner harmony there must be or else there will always be clash and disorder". What is that inner harmony?

A: Union in the Mother.

21-4-1933

(3)

The Mother's victory is essentially a victory of each sadhak over himself. It can only be then that any external form of work can come to a harmonious perfection.

12-11-1937

The Most Needed Thing

The one thing that is most needed for this sadhana is peace, calm, especially in the vital—a peace which depends not on circumstances or surroundings but on the inner contact with a higher consciousness which is the consciousness of the Divine, of the Mother. Those who have not that or do not aspire to get it can come here and live in the Ashram for ten or twenty years and yet be as restless and full of struggle as ever,—those who open their mind and vital to the Mother's strength and peace get it even in the hardest and most unpleasant work and the worst circumstances.

October, 1933

.

• •

*Ordinary Fellowship and Unity
in the New Consciousness*

The Mother has not laid stress on human fellowship of the ordinary kind between the inmates (though good feeling, consideration and courtesy should always be there), because that is not the aim; it is a unity in a new consciousness that is the aim, and the first thing is for each to do his sadhana to

arrive at that new consciousness and realise oneness there.

31-10-1935

Mother's Disapproval of Complete Retirement

Mother does not at all approve of the idea of a complete retirement. It does not bring the control, only an illusion of a control because the untoward causes are removed for a time. It is a control established while in contact with the outward things that is alone genuine. You must establish that from within by a fixed resolution and practice. Too much mixing and too much talk should be avoided, but a complete retirement is not the thing. It has not had the required result with anyone so far.

27-11-1936

Conquering the Powers of Life for the Mother

This Yoga does not mean a rejection of the powers of life, but an inner transformation and a change of the spirit in the life and the use of the

powers. These powers are now used in an egoistic spirit and for undivine ends; they have to be used in a spirit of surrender to the Divine and for the purposes of the divine Work. That is what is meant by conquering them back for the Mother.

Commerce and Spiritual Profit

If you give the money to the Mother, that can't be commercial; commerce implies personal profit, and here your profit is only spiritual.

2-4-1944

The Mother and the Expression of Beauty

(1)

Q: "*Pourquoi la Mère s'habille-t-elle avec des vêtements riches et beaux?*"

A: Avez-vous donc pour conception que le Divin doit être représenté sur terre par la pauvreté et la laideur?]¹

¹ Q: Why does the Mother put on rich and beautiful dresses?

A: Is it your notion that the Divine should be represented on earth by poverty and ugliness?

Beauty is as much an expression of the Divine as Knowledge, Power or Ananda. Does anyone ask why does the Mother want to manifest the divine consciousness by knowledge or by power and not by ignorance and weakness? It would not be a more absurd or meaningless question than the one put by the vital against her wearing artistic and beautiful dress.

27-2-1933

(2)

Q: Does it make any difference to the Mother's consciousness whether she puts on fine saris or ordinary ones, whether she lives in a palace or in forest? What do these outer things add to the inner reality? Probably they may be causing its diminution.

A: Outer things are the expression of something in the inner reality. A fine sari or a palace are expressions of the principle of beauty in things and that is their main value. The Divine Consciousness is not bound by these things and has no attachment, but it is also not bound to abstain from them if beauty in things is part of its intended action. The Mother, when the Ashram was still unformed, was wearing

patched cotton saris. When she took up the work, it was necessary to change her habits, so she did so.

22-10-1935

The Mother's Approval of Right Expression

Why should you think the Mother does not approve of expression,—provided it is the right expression of the right thing,—or suppose that silence and true expression are contradictory? The truest expression comes out of an absolute inner silence. The spiritual silence is not a mere emptiness; nor is it indispensable to abstain from all activity in order to find it.

The Mother's Appreciation of Indian Music

What can be stranger than this idea of yours that the Mother likes only European music and does not like or appreciate Indian music—that she only pretends to do it or that she tolerates it so as not to discourage people! Remember that it is the Mother who has always praised and supported your music and put her force behind you so that your music might develop into spiritual perfection and

beauty. In your poetry it was I that supported you most, in detail; the Mother could only do it with a general force because she could not read the original (though she found them in translations very beautiful), but in music it has been just the other way round. You surely are not going to say that all that was unfelt? And the development of X? That too was Indian music, not European. And then when I write to you in praise of your music, do you think it is only my opinion that I am transmitting? Most often it is her words that I use to express our common feeling.

20-12-1932

*Differences in The Mother's Way of
Dealing with Sadhaks*

(1)

You have spoken of your singing. You know well that we approve of it, and I have constantly stressed its necessity for you as well as that of your poetry. But the Mother absolutely forbade A's singing. So you see that to music for some she is indifferent or even discourages it, for others she approves as for B, C and others. For some time she encouraged

the concerts, afterwards she stopped them. You drew from the prohibition to A and the stopping of the concerts the conclusion that the Mother did not like music or did not like Indian music or considered music bad for sadhana, and all sorts of strange mental reasons like that. Mother prohibited A because while music was good for you, it was spiritual poison to A—the moment he began to think of it and of audiences, all the vulgarity and unspirituality in his nature rose to the surface. You can see what he is doing with it now. So, again, with concerts though in a different way: she stopped them because she had seen that wrong forces were coming into the atmosphere, which had nothing to do with music in itself: her motives were not mental. It was for similar reasons that she drew back from big public displays like D's. On the other hand, she favoured and herself planned the exhibition of painting at the Town Hall. So you will see that there is no mental rule, but in each case the guidance is determined by spiritual reasons which are of a flexible character. There is no other consideration, no rule; music, painting, poetry and many other activities which are of the mind and vital can be used as part of spiritual development or of the work and for a spiritual purpose: "it depends on the spirit in which they are done."

That being established, these things depend on the spirit, the nature of the person, its needs, the conditions and circumstances.

(2)

It is the Mother's business. She alone can say what is the right way to deal with people. If she were to deal with people only according to their defects, there would be hardly half a dozen people left in the Ashram.

26-3-1934

(3)

The sadhana is done by the Mother according to the Truth and necessity of each nature and of each plane of Nature. It is not one fixed process.

13-9-1933

(4)

Concern yourself with your own progress and follow there the lead the Mother gives you. Leave

others to do the same; the Mother is there to guide and help them according to their need and their nature. It does not in the least matter if the way she follows with him seems different or the opposite of that which she takes with you. That is the right one for him, as this is the right one for you.

25-10-1932

(5)

The Mother speaks or writes much more pointedly and sharply to those whom she wishes to push rapidly on the way because they are capable of it, and they do not resent or suffer but are glad of the pressure and the plainness because they know by experience that it helps them to see their obstacles and change. If you wish to progress rapidly you must get rid of this vital reaction of *abhimān*, suffering, wounded feeling, seeking for argument of self-justification, outcry against the touch that is intended to liberate—for so long as you have these, it is difficult for us to deal openly and firmly with the obstacles created by the vital nature.

In regard to the difference between you and X: The Mother's warning to you against the undesirability of too much talk, loose chat and gossip, social

self-dispersion was entirely meant and stands; when you indulge in these things, you throw yourself out into a very small and ignorant consciousness, in which your vital defects get free play and this is likely to bring you out of what you have developed in your inner consciousness. That was why we said that if you felt a reaction against these things when you went to X's, it was a sign of your (psychic) sensitiveness coming into you—into your vital and nervous being, and we meant that it was all for the good. But in dealing with others, in withdrawing from these things you should not allow any sense of superiority to creep in, or force on them by your manner or spirit a sense of disapproval or condemnation or pressure on them to change. It is for your personal inward need that you draw back from these things, that is all. As for them, what they do in these matters, right or wrong, is their affair, and ours; we will deal with them according to what we see as necessary and possible for them at the moment, and for that purpose we can not only deal quite differently with different people, allowing for one what we forbid for another, but we may deal differently with the same person at different times, allowing or even encouraging today what we shall forbid tomorrow.... A human soul and nature cannot be dealt with by a

set of mental rules applicable to everybody in the same way; if it were so, there would be no need of a Guru, each could set his chart of Yogic rules before him like the rules of Sandow's exercise and follow them till he became the perfect Siddha!

25-10-1932

The Mother's Use of the Mahakali Method

(1)

All these things depend on the person, the condition, the circumstances. The Mother uses the method you speak of, the Mahakali method,

(1) with those in whom there is a great eagerness and a fundamental sincerity somewhere even in the vital,

(2) with those whom she meets intimately and who, she knows, will not resent or misunderstand her severity or take it for a withdrawal of kindness or grace, but will regard it as a true grace and a help to their sadhana.

There are others who cannot bear this method—if it was continued they would run a thousand miles away in misunderstanding and revolt and

despair. What the Mother wants is for people to have their full chance for their souls, be the method short and swift or long and tortuous. Each she must treat according to his nature.

9-5-1933

(2)

If you are afraid of the Mother's scoldings, how will you progress? Those who want to progress quickly, welcome even the blows of Mahakali, because that pushes them more rapidly on the way.

The Mother's Way of Working

The difficulty about meeting your demand that the Mother should plan out and fix a routine for you in everything which you must follow is that this is quite contrary to the Mother's way of working in most matters. In the most physical things you have to fix a programme in order to deal with time, otherwise all becomes a sea of confusion and haphazard. Fixed rules have also to be made for the management of material things so long as people are not sufficiently developed to deal with them in the

right way without rules. But these things of which you write are different; they are concerned with your inner development, your sadhana. In fact, even in outward things the Mother does not plan with her mind and make a mental map and rule of what is to be done; she sees what is to be done in each case and organises and develops it according to the nature of each case. In matters of the inner development and the sadhana it is still more impossible to map out a plan fixed in every detail and say, "Every time you shall step here, there, in this way, or that line and no other." Things would become so tied up and rigid that nothing could be done; there would be no true and effective movement.

If the Mother asked you to tell her everything, it was not in order that she might give you directions in every detail which you must obey. It was in order, first, that there might grow up the complete intimacy in which you would be entirely open to her, so that she might pour more and more and continuously and at every point the Divine Force into you which would increase the Light in you, perfect your action, deliver and develop your nature. It is this that was important; all else is secondary, important only so far as it helps this or hinders. In addition, it would help her to give whenever needed the necessary direction, the necessary help or warning, not always

by words, more often by a silent intervention and pressure. This is her way of dealing with those who are open to her; it is not necessary to give express orders at every moment and in every detail. Especially, if the psychic consciousness is open and one lives fully in that, it gets the intimation at once and sees things clearly and receives the help, the intervention, the necessary direction or warning. That was what was happening to a great extent when your psychic consciousness was very active, but there was a vital part in which you were not open and which was coming up repeatedly, and it is this that has created the confusion and the trouble.

Everything depends on the inner condition, and the outward action is only useful as a means and a help for expressing or confirming the inner condition and making it dynamic and effective. If you do or say a thing with the psychic uppermost or with the right inner touch, it will be effective; if you do or say the same thing out of the mind or the vital or with a wrong or mixed atmosphere, it may be quite ineffective. To do the right thing in the right way in each case and at each moment one must be in the right consciousness—it can't be done by following a fixed mental rule which under some circumstances might fit in and under others might

not fit in at all. A general principle can be laid down if it is in consonance with the Truth, but its application must be determined by the inner consciousness seeing at each step what is to be done or not done. If the psychic is uppermost, if the being is entirely turned towards the Mother and follows the psychic, this can be increasingly done.

All depends therefore not on a mental rule to follow in practice, but in getting the psychic consciousness back and putting its light into this vital part and making that part turn wholly to the Mother. It is not that the question of your going too much to X is of no importance,—it is of considerable importance—but to limit the contact is effective only as a means of helping your vital part to withdraw from this servitude to old movements. It is the same everywhere. •

•The kind of outward obedience you lay stress on, asking for a direction in every detail, is not the essence of surrender, although obedience is the natural fruit and outward body of surrender. Surrender is from within, opening and giving the mind, vital, physical, all to the Mother for her to take them as her own and re-create them in their true being which is a portion of the Divine; all the rest follows as a consequence. It would not then be necessary to ask her word and order outwardly

in every detail, the being would feel and act according to her will; her sanction would be sought as the seal of that inner unity, receptiveness of her will and obedience.

11-6-1932

The Mother's Regard for Truth

(1)

Mother heard that X had objected to your working in the room but she brushed it aside at once saying that that could have no importance. It has nothing to do with her decision which was made on other grounds quite independently of it.

A lie is a lie whoever speaks it. If you give credit to what someone or another thinks or says as Mother's motive in an action, take her statement of her motive as untrue and somebody else's who cannot know as sound and true and on that challenge Mother for want of frankness, is the resulting upset our fault? It is a question of greater confidence in the Mother than in the statements or interpretations of sadhaks or the hasty assumptions or inferences of your mind or the feelings of your

vital made without having the needed information. If you could get rid of that movement, things would be easier.

15-5-1936

(2)

Q: I interpreted the Mother's decision by thinking that she was acting from a higher motive which was different from the one she gave me. I took this to be her superhuman way of working and not as a lie. How can the maxim "a lie is a lie" apply to all? It can apply only to those who are bound by moral and social codes or as a principle only if the intention behind is wrong. If a higher motive demands a concealing or misrepresenting something by words I would hardly call it a lie. I think Krishna did not always speak the exact truth and his half-lies often provoke an understanding smile in all who listen to his stories.

A: If the Mother did a thing for one reason and said that she did it for quite another she did not have, I fail to see how it can be anything but a falsehood. No superhuman motive can make a falsehood not a falsehood. Moreover, if you really believe that the Divine can speak what is not true without being untrue and that that is a part of

divinity, why do you resent when you think the Mother has done it and grow sorrowful and indignant over her supposed unfair and uncandid treatment of you and cry she ought to have been frank, etc.? You ought rather to think she is acting from superhuman motives and accept gladly whatever she does. At least that seems to be the logic of such a position.

You base yourself evidently on the position that the Divine Consciousness is above good and evil. But that does not mean that it does evil and good impartially. It can only mean that it acts from a light that is beyond that level of human consciousness which makes the human standard of these things. It acts for and from a greater good than the apparent good men follow after. It acts also according to a greater truth than men conceive. It is for this reason that the human mind cannot understand the divine action and its motives—he must first rise into a higher consciousness and be in spiritual contact or union with the Divine. But if anyone recognises that, he can no longer judge the divine action with his human mind and from his human point of view. The two things would be quite incompatible.

But this does not fall under any such explanation. To allege a false motive cannot be a movement of a greater Truth and consciousness. To keep silence

and not reveal one's motive is one thing—to say I did not act from that motive when I actually did so, is not silence, it is falsehood. It is a matter not of moral, but spiritual importance. The Mother cares for the Truth and she has always said that lying and falsehood create a serious obstacle to realisation. How then can she herself do that?

I do not remember any lies or half-lies told by Krishna, so I can say nothing on that point. But if he did according to the Mahabharata or the Bhagawata, we are not bound either by that record or by that example. I think Rama and Buddha told none.

17-5-1936

(3)

• It is good if you have freed yourself from this bondage. Love of Truth is divine, but this kind of truth is a very mixed product accompanied as it is by hardness or a fierce anger. Truth does not insist on a blind adherence to the spoken word—as for instance, if a man says that he will kill another under the impression that that other has done him a grievous wrong and afterwards carries out his word even when he has found out that the other was innocent and no wrong done. That is what literal

adhesion to the spoken word would come to, if scrupulously held as a principle. Truth, on the contrary, demands that a man shall cleave to the principle of Truth in things only, and in the case above the principle of Truth would demand that he should break his vow and not keep it. If a man pledges himself to something that is against the principle of Love and Compassion, or against that of obedience and surrender to the Divine, it is not Truth to keep that pledge—for it would be a pledge to follow falsehood—and how can Truth be held in allegiance to falsehood? That would be an asuric, not a divine Truthfulness.

As for the Mother, one will not find in her this blind adherence to an arrangement once made. If, for instance, she told someone, next time you yield to sex-passion in any way, you will have to leave the Ashram, and if the man did it and repented, she too might relent and not insist in following out her menace. These matters of interviews are not promises, contracts or engagements,—they are arrangements only and can be altered. If she has arranged for half an hour she can make it instead three-quarters of an hour—or diminish it to twenty minutes. There is a plasticity needed in the movement of time and the habit of life cannot afford to be rigid in its movements, otherwise life would

either be turned into a mere mechanism or break to pieces. But in this case there was no intention; it was a pure accident; by some oversight your name had not been written in the morning list and Mother came to the door when those on the list were finished. She could not go back because it was extremely late and it had been a long and exhausting morning spent in a continual struggle with adverse forces and she had to come in, do what still she had to do and come to me to report what had happened.

But even if she had intended it for some reason not known to you, your reaction was not the right one. For the basis you have taken for your Yoga is to obey the Will whatever it may be. These things—seemingly accidental—happen when they are predestined and they come in as an ordeal for something in the vital which has by this painful process to accept change.

28-9-1933

*Futility of Judging Mother's
Actions by Mind*

(I)

Obviously. Neither Nature nor Destiny nor the

Divine work in the mental way or by the law of the mind or according to its standards—that is why even to the scientist and the philosopher Nature, Destiny, the way of the Divine all seem a mystery. The Mother does not act by the mind, so to judge her action with the mind is futile.

5-5-1936

(2)

The Mother does not discuss these mental problems with her disciples. It is quite useless trying to reconcile these things with the intellect. For there are two things, the Ignorance from which the struggle and discord comes and the secret Light, Unity, Bliss and Harmony. The Intellect belongs to the Ignorance. It is only by getting into a better consciousness that one can live in the Light and Bliss and Unity and not be touched by the outward discord and struggle. That change of consciousness therefore is the only thing that matters, to reconcile with the intellect would make no difference.

Misrepresentation of the Mother's Words

It is not X alone, but many or most who turn things (spoken by the Mother) in that way—the tendency is almost universal in human nature. It is not from dishonesty that he or others do it—it is because when they listen, their minds are not silent but active and the thought of their minds mixes with what they have heard and gives it another turn or shape or colour. Often also the vital interferes and exaggerates or reshapes according to the desire or the convenience. This is much more often unconsciously than consciously done.

In the present instance, the Mother spoke quite generally, not about Y or what had happened in Z's case, and she meant that what ought to be remembered is not remembered because of some strong immediate desire which pushes the memory behind until the desire is fulfilled and then only, if at all, the recollection comes. X evidently added his own ideas, applied it specially to Y's action and thought that the Mother had said it was consciously done—that Y remembered and yet went against her conscious sense of right in order to fulfil her desire. That was not what the Mother said or meant by her general statement.

30-3-1933

Dangers of "All from the Mother" Theory

What you write is in itself unexceptionable—it is indeed what was offered to the sadhaks at the beginning—but the difficulty is precisely there, in the complete sincerity of the nature. Few have been able to rise to it and only a distant approximation (if the phrase can be accepted) has been attained by some. Apart from incomplete sincerity, there is the difficulty that the brain is clouded by egoism and desire and imagines it is doing the very thing when it is doing something else. That is why I spoke of the danger of the theory of all from the Mother. There are people who have taken it that all that comes from the ego or the vital comes from the Mother, is her inspiration or what she has given them. There are others who have taken it as an excuse for going on in the old rut independently, saying that when the Mother wants she will change things! There were even some who on this basis created a subjective Mother in themselves whose dictates, flattering to their ego and desire, they pitted against the contrary dictates of the Mother here, and came to think that this external Mother is after all new and the real thing is the inner one or that she was putting them through an ordeal by contradicting the inner dictates and

seeing what they would do! The truth remains the truth, but this power of twisting by the mind and other parts of the nature has to be kept in sight also.

17-10-1936

The Mother's Work and Time

(1)

It is not because your French is full of mistakes that Mother does not correct it, but because I will not allow her to take more work on herself so far as I can help it. Already she has no time to rest sufficiently at night and most of the night she is working at the books, reports and letters that pour on her in masses. Even so she cannot finish in time in the morning. If she has to correct all the letters of the people who have just begun writing in French as well as the others, it means another hour or two of work—she will be able to finish only at nine in the morning and come down at 10-30. I am therefore trying to stop it.

(2)

Mother never avoids opening letters or any other

work because of absence of time: she deals with all the work that comes to her even if she is ill or if she has no time for rest.

15-2-1936

(3)

Mother prefers that when she walks on the terrace people should not be looking at her because it is the only time when she can concentrate a little on herself—apart from the necessity of taking some fresh air and movement for the health of the body. If she has to attend to the pull of so many people, that cannot be done. The interview she gives you is a different matter; she has to arrange it herself and it is part of her work, so there is no need to change. What was said was only for the walk on the terrace.

(4)

Mother has a very limited time for seeing people—she has so much to do. So it is only when there is a strong necessity that she sees except for those who have work to do with her.

1933

The Right Way of Meeting the Mother

(1)

The right attitude to approach the Mother when she sees one is to keep the being perfectly quiet and open to receive, without any activity of the mind or desire in the vital, with only the surrender and the psychic readiness to accept whatever is given.

23-2-1932

(2)

When one comes to the Mother, one must not come with these things in the mind—but in quietude and light solely to receive from her what one can assimilate.

10-4-1934

(3)

You must remember that for her (the Mother)

a physical contact of this kind with others is not a mere social or domestic meeting with a few superficial movements which make no great difference one way or the other. It means for her an interchange, a pouring out of her forces and a receiving of things good, bad and mixed from them which often involves a great labour of adjustment and elimination, and in many cases, though not in all, a severe strain on the body.

12-II-1931

(4)

Why should you decide beforehand that your birthday is spoiled? You have only to throw off all these undesirable ideas and feelings which proceed from a still imperfectly purified part of the external being and take the right attitude which you should always have when you come to the Mother. There should be no idea of what others have or have not—your relation is between the Mother and yourself and has nothing to do with others. Nothing should exist for you but yourself and the Divine—yourself receiving her Force flowing into you.

To secure that better, do not spend your time at your disposal in speech—especially if anything of the depression remains with you, it will waste the time in discussing things which cannot help the true consciousness to predominate. Concentrate, open yourself and let the Mother bring you back to the psychic condition by what she will pour into you in meditation and silence.

16-5-1933

Significance of Birthday Meeting

(I)

Q: Is there any special significance in the Mother's seeing the sadhaks on their birthdays?

A: About the birthdays. There is a rhythm (one among many) in the play of the world-forces which is connected with the sun and the planets. That makes the birthday a day of possible renewal when the being is likely to be more plastic. It is for

this reason that Mother sees people on their birthdays.

18-5-1934

(2)

Q: You wrote once that on birthdays the physical is more open and receptive to the Mother than on other days. Is that why she gives special blessings to us on our birthdays?

A: It is not a question of a physical birthday or of the body—it is taken as an occasion for opening a new year of life with a growing new birth within. That is the meaning in which the Mother takes the birthday.

7-10-1936

Meeting the Mother in Dream

(1)

Q: For a long time I was thinking of meeting the Mother but was hesitating to ask for an interview.

Last night in dream I met her and had a talk with her. Was it the real Mother I met or some constructed figure of my dream-mind?

A: Of course, it was the Mother you met and the meeting must have been due to your thought about meeting her.

9-6-1935

(2)

Q: Kindly let me know the significance of my frequently coming to the Mother on the supraphysical plane. Did my vital come to the Mother for refreshing its energy, for purification, etc?

A: This kind of vital coming to the Mother all the sadhaks have in their sleep and dream, if they are a little conscious there. Even those who are not sadhaks or others who do not know her come, but they are not aware of it. The vital plane is a supraphysical plane. The vital moves about in its own plane and is not limited by the physical mind or its consciousness or experience.

13-7-1937

(3)

It (coming to the Mother on a supraphysical plane) may be for any object or without any specific object—there is no rule in such matters.

14-7-1937

(4)

Q: I saw twice in dream that the Mother was giving me soup with her hand and I was bowing down at her feet? Why did I see like this? What is the spiritual meaning of the soup which the Mother was giving us?

A: The soup was instituted in order to establish a means by which the sadhak might receive something from the Mother by an interchange in the material consciousness. Owing to the past association probably you see like that when your material consciousness in dream receives something from the Mother.

27-7-1933

The Mother's Action in Meditation

(I)

When I spoke of the inner mind of the Ashram, I was only using a succinct expression for the "minds of the members of the Ashram" and I was not thinking of the collective mind of the group. But the action of the Mother in the meditation is at once collective and individual. She is trying to bring down the right consciousness in the atmosphere of the Ashram—for the action of the minds and vital of the sadhaks does create a general atmosphere. She has taken this meditation in the evening as a brief period in which all is concentrated in the sole force of the descending Power. The sadhaks must feel that they are there only to concentrate, only to receive, only to be open to the Mother and nothing else matters.

November, 1934

(2)

About the meditation and the seat, the Mother gives this meditation *only* for bringing down the

true light and consciousness into the sadhaks. She does not want it to be turned into a formality and she does not want any personal questions to arise there. It should solely be a meditation and concentration without personal or other desires or claims or ideas rising there and interfering with her object.

2-II-1934

(3)

It is not by the physical presence but the Mother's concentration at the time of meditation which brings the quiet to those who can receive it.

6-3-1937

(4)

Q: I feel that when the Mother comes down to give meditation in the Meditation Hall, the atmosphere of the Hall extends to all the Ashram houses. Am I right in my feeling?

A: It is natural that it should be so as the Mother, when she concentrates on the inner work, is accus-

tomed spontaneously to spread her consciousness over the whole Ashram. So to anyone who is sensitive, it must be felt anywhere in the Ashram, though perhaps more strongly in the nearer houses on an occasion like the evening meditation.

7-II-1934

Right Use of Darshan and Pranam

(I)

Physical means (like darshan and touch in the Pranam) can be and are used in the approach to divine love and worship; they have not been allowed merely as a concession to human weakness, nor is it the fact that in the psychic way there is no place for such things. On the contrary, they are one means of approaching the Divine and receiving the Light and materialising the psychic contact, and so long as it is done in the right spirit and they are used for the true purpose they have their place. It is only if they are misused or the approach is not right because tainted by indifference and inertia, or revolt or hostility, or some gross desire, that they are out of place and can have a contrary effect

—as the Mother has always warned people and has assigned it as the reason why she does not like lightly to open them to everyone.

(2)

No one should look upon the Pranam either as a formal routine or an obligatory ceremony or think himself under any compulsion to come there. The object of the Pranam is not that sadhaks should offer a formal or ritual daily homage to the Mother, but that the sadhaks may receive along with the Mother's blessings whatever spiritual help or influence they are in a condition to receive or assimilate. It is important to maintain a quiet and collected atmosphere for that purpose.

(3)

If you attach any value to the Darshan it is better to be *recueilli*. If her coming is only one incident of the day's routine like taking dinner, then of course it does not matter.

(4)

The best way for Darshan is to keep oneself very collected and quiet and open to receive whatever the Mother gives.

12-2-1937

Wrong Suggestion of Making Pranam to Others

It (the wish to make pranam to others) is a wrong suggestion from somewhere. It is very necessary not to take the attitude of pranam to others or to give even in thought a place at all approaching or similar to the Mother's.

27-7-1934

Pranam and the Mother's Contact

(1)

Mother's contact is there all the day and the night also. If one keeps the right contact with her inwardly all day, the Pranam will bear its right fruit, for you will be in the right condition to receive. To

make the whole day depend upon the Pranam, the whole inner attitude depend on the most outer aspect of the outer contact is to turn the whole thing topsy-turvy. It is the fundamental mistake made by the physical mind and vital which is the cause of the whole trouble.

16-3-1935

(2)

It is only if one can feel the inward touch' of the Mother without the necessity of the physical contact that the true value of the latter can be really active. Otherwise there is a danger of its becoming like a mere artificial stimulant or a pulling of vital force from her for one's own benefit.

2-3-1937

(3)

If they are so dependent on the physical touch that they cannot feel anything when it is not there, this means that they have not used it at all for developing the inner connection; if they had, the inner connection after so many years would already be

there. The inner connection can only be developed by an inner concentration and aspiration, not by a mere outward Pranam every day. What most people do is simply to pull vital force from the Mother and live on it—but that is not the object of the Pranam.

4-3-1937

(4)

Yes, but the vital's test is very foolish. If the sadhana goes on whether you see the Mother or not, that would rather show that the psychic connection is permanently there and active always and does not depend on the physical contact. The vital seems to think the sadhana ought to cease if you do not see the Mother but that would only mean that the love and devotion need the stimulus of physical contact. The greatest test of love and devotion is on the contrary when it burns as strongly in long absence as in the presence. If your sadhana went on as well on non-Pranam as on Pranam days it would not prove that love and devotion are not there, but that they are so strong as to be self-existent in all circumstances.

8-6-1936

(5)

Q: It is curious that I feel Mother nearer at Pranam time than when she meets us and speaks to us familiarly. Is it because of a defect of the physical mind?

A: Yes—or at least of some part of the physical consciousness.

30-4-1934

Two Ways of the Mother's Giving

(1)

The Mother gives in both ways. Through the eyes it is to the psychic, through the hand to the material.

29-9-1932

(2)

Obviously, the time has nothing to do with it. One hour's touch or a moment's touch—as much can be given by the one as by the other.

18-4-1935

Significance of the Mother's Giving of Flowers

(1)

Q: What is the significance of the Mother's giving us flowers at Pranam every day?

A: It is meant to help the realisation of the thing the flower stands for.

28-4-1933

(2)

Q: Are flowers mere symbols and nothing more? Can the flower symbolizing silence, for example, help in the realisation of silence?

A: It is when the Mother puts her force into the flower that it becomes more than a symbol. It then can become very effective if there is receptivity in the one who receives.

19-7-1937

(3)

Q: We do not get from the Mother the flowers which our mind thinks we should get.

A: Obviously not—the mind chooses according to likings or fancies or else to some mental idea of what should be; the Mother chooses by intuitive observation of what is needed.

9-7-1934

*Wrong Ideas about
The Mother's Smile and Touch at Pranam*

The Mother deals with each one in a different way, according to their need and their nature, not according to any fixed mental rule. It would be absurd for her to do the same thing with everybody as if all were machines which had to be touched and handled in the same way. It does not at all mean that she has more affection for one than for another, or those she touches in a particular way are better sadhaks or less so. The sadhaks think in that way because they are full of ignorance and ego. Instead

of thinking whether the Mother favours one more or the other less, comparing and watching what she does, they ought to be concerned at Pranam with only their own spiritual reception of her influence. Pranam is for that and not for these other things which have nothing to do with sadhana.

Jealousy and envy are things common to human nature, but these are the very things that a sadhak ought to throw out of himself. Otherwise why is he a sadhak at all? He is supposed to be here for seeking the Divine—but in the seeking for the Divine jealousy, envy, anger, etc., have no place. They are movements of the ego and can only create obstacles to the union with the Divine.

It is much better to remember that one is seeking for the Divine and make that the whole governing idea and aim of the life. It is that which pleases the Mother more than anything else; these jealousies and envies and competitions for her favour can only displease and distress her.

31-10-1935

(2)

All this idea about the Mother's looks and her

hand in the blessing which is current in the Ashram is perfectly irrational, false, even imbecile. I have a hundred times written to people that the whole thing is wrong and rests on a false suggestion of the adverse forces made in order to create a disturbance. The Mother does not refrain from smiling or vary her smile or her manner of blessing in order to show displeasure or because of anything the sadhak has done. She does not, as certain people annoyingly believe, dose out her smiles or blessings in such a way as to assign a number of marks for each sadhak according to his good behaviour or bad behaviour. These variations are not intended to assign a competitive place to each sadhak, as to schoolboys in a class. All these ideas are absolutely absurd, trivial and unspiritual. The Ashram is not a schoolboys' class nor is the Yoga a competitive examination. All this is the creation of the narrow physical mind and vital ego and desire. If the sadhaks want to get a true basis and make true progress, they must get these ideas out of their minds altogether. Yet they cling obstinately to it in spite of all I can write, so dear is this falsehood to their mind. You must get rid of it altogether. At the Pranam the Mother puts her force to help the sadhak—what he ought to do is to receive quietly and simply, not to spoil the occasion by these foolish ideas and by watching who

gets more of her hand and smile and who gets less. All that must go.

8-12-1936

(3)

It is not the mind but the lower vital that gets troubled after Pranam—all the rest comes in as suggestions because the gate has been opened to them by this trouble. There are certain stock tricks of the adverse Force to disturb the sadhana and one of them is this notion in the lower vital of not having been perfectly blessed at Pranam or not having got a smile or not the proper kind of smile or of the Mother's face being serious and severe. Whoever lets in that feeling, immediately suggestions of revolt, depression or dissatisfaction pour in into his mind. The only thing to be done for that is to cast off patiently all acceptance of this feeling, knowing that it is a drop of poison from the Adversary.

28-7-1936

(4)

It is certainly your imagination which makes you think that the Mother was "indifferent" or "hard" to you at Pranam. The Mother, on the contrary, made a special concentration in her blessing to help you. There are a certain number of sadhaks who, when she does that, invariably ask, "Why were you displeased and hard with me today?", while there are others who cry out if there is the slightest departure from the ordinary movements, assuming that the Mother must have had a deliberate intention in it and that intention necessarily unfavourable to them, an intention of indifference or displeasure, and very often when she smiles more than usual in order to give them courage, they write to her that she was very serious that day and did not smile at all. Do not allow yourself to catch the infection and become one of them; for it creates a great obstacle to the help given and opens the door to serious vital troubles. Open yourself simply to the Mother's help with trust and confidence, that is the best way of not feeling far from her.

Mother did not know at that time of your having spoken to X. So your conjecture of that being the cause of her fancied displeasure is quite groundless. It is quite wrong to think that Mother gets dis-

pleased and angry with the sadhaks and shows it with her actions at Pranam. This kind of idea of the Divine or of the Mother is a very mistaken one and you should not allow it to get hold of you.

5-7-1935

(5)

When the Mother does not smile at Pranam, it is not from displeasure but in almost every case from some reason not connected with any action of the sadhak,—either from absorption or concentration on something that is being done. As you say, it does not matter—what is important is to receive what has to be received.

4-11-1934

(6)

It is a mistake to think that the Mother's not smiling means either displeasure or disapproval of something wrong in the sadhak. It is very often merely a sign of absorption or of inner concentration.

On this occasion the Mother was putting a question to your soul.

31-7-1938

(7)

The Mother's seriousness (at Pranam) is due to some absorption in some work she is doing or very often to some strong attack of hostile forces in the atmosphere.

19-4-1935

(8)

You should certainly throw away the vital demand and the disturbance which it creates in your sadhana. Mother gives her smile to all and she does not withhold it from some and give it to others. When people think otherwise, it is because some vital disturbance, depression or demand or some movement of jealousy, envy or competition distorts their vision.

27-2-1933

(9)

On that day the Mother did not smile at anybody. It was not personal to you. A particular Power was acting in her which did not act in the ordinary way.

10-4-1934

(10)

If the Mother does not put her hand on the head in Pranām, it does not mean that she is displeased—it may have quite other causes. People have this idea but they are quite mistaken. Sometime ago the Mother failed to put her hand on the head of a sadhika at Pranam for two days. People mocked at her and looked down at her. As a matter of fact she was having remarkable realisations and getting more power from the Mother at Pranam than on ordinary days. The whole idea is an error.

2-8-1933

(11)

It is not true. There are instances in which Mother did not smile or put her hand at all (being

in trance) but the sadhak being in a right and receptive attitude received far more than ever before.

(12)

Your idea about Mother's mysterious smile is your own imagination—Mother says that she smiled with the utmost kindness and took the most helpful attitude possible towards you. I had written to you already that you must not put these imaginations between yourself and the Mother; for they push the help given away from you. These imaginations and their effect on you are suggested by the same vital forces that are disturbing you so that you may not get free from the disturbance.

My help and the Mother's help are there—you have only to keep yourself open to it to recover.

27-3-1933

(13)¹

Why should you think that the Mother will be angry? We have ourselves told you to write everything frankly and conceal nothing—so there is not the

least likelihood that she will resent what you write. Moreover, she knows perfectly well the difficulties of the sadhana and of human nature and if there is a goodwill and a sincere aspiration such as you have, any stumblings or falterings of the moment will not make any difference in her attitude to the sadhak. The Mother thinks you must have had a wrong impression about her putting her hand just a little only—for she was just the same with you as always and there has been no reason why there should be any change.

17-4-1933

(14)

I do not at all understand why you should think that the Mother was displeased with you for any reason whatever. She was just as she is always with you. Even if you had made any mistake, the Mother now is disposed to overlook mistakes and leave it to the pressure of the Light and the psychic being of the sadhak to set things right. But why on earth should she be displeased because you wanted to stop the French lessons with X or for any such trivial reason! Whether you continue or suspend your

lessons is a detail which has to be settled in accordance with the condition of your mind and the needs of your sadhana and it can be settled either way. It is surprising that you should think Mother could show displeasure over so slight a matter. You must get over a nervousness of this kind and not disturb your good condition by imaginations—for it is an imagination since it had no reality behind it. Have a more perfect confidence and do not let your mind create difficulties where there are none.

(15)

Mother was not in the least displeased about the tea, why should she be? Nor was she angry with you at all. She smiled at you as usual—you must have been thinking of something else and not observed it. There is no reason at all for your sadness therefore—you should throw these ideas aside, Mother does not get displeased about such trifles.

30-11-1933

(16)

Exactly, I say "the Mother's smiling or not

smiling has nothing to do with anything in you.” I say also “It is yourself becoming conscious, it is not any displeasure of the Mother that makes you conscious—it is her mere presence that makes it possible for you to become conscious of yourself, it is not any displeasure, it is not any sad looking that does it.”

(17)

There is no chance of the Mother giving you the ‘look’ you fear. On your side do not imagine one when it is not there—any number of people are still doing that!

• (18)

It is, of course, the resistance of the old vital in the past that is being redeemed which creates this irritation and these imaginations about the Mother’s displeasure. For, as a matter of fact, there was no dissatisfaction against you in the Mother’s mind and this idea is usually a suggestion to the sadhak’s mind from the Force that wants to create the wish to go or any other kind of discontent or depression. It is a curious form of delusion that has taken root, as it

were, in the Ashram atmosphere and is cherished not so much by the individual vital as by the forces that work upon it to break, if possible, the sadhana. You must not allow any harbourage to that or else it will create any amount of trouble. The absence of proper sleep naturally brings a state of fatigue in the nerves which helps these things to come—for it is through the physical consciousness that they attack and if it can make that consciousness tamasic in any way, their entry is more easy.

15-9-1936

(19)

The Mother has in no way changed towards you nor is she disappointed with you—that is the suggestion drawn from your own state of mind and putting its wrong sense of disappointment and unfitness on to the Mother. She has no reason to change or be disappointed, as she has always been aware of the vital obstacles in you and still expected and expects you to overcome them. The call to change certain things that seem to be in the grain of character is proving difficult even for the best sadhaks, but the difficulty is no proof of incompetence. It is

precisely this impulse to go that you must refuse to admit—for so long as these forces think they can bring it about, they will press as much as they can on this point. You must also open yourself more to the Mother's Force in that part and for that it is necessary to get rid of this suggestion about the Mother's disappointment or lack of love, for it is this which creates the reaction at the time of Pranam. Our help, support, love are there always as before—keep yourself open to them and with their aid drive out these suggestions.

26-1-1937

(20)

Mother put her hand just as usual. Not only so, but as she saw your condition needed special help, she tried to give it. But when you are in this condition, it is unfortunate that you are so much occupied with the feeling of misery as to feel nothing else, nothing that does not minister to or increase the misery. Support you always have; there is absolutely no reason why we should withhold it. If anyone is in serious trouble in the Ashram, that falls on us and most on the Mother—so it is absurd to suppose that we can take pleasure in anyone suffering. Suffering, illness, vital storms (lusts, revolts, angers)

are so many contradictions of what we are striving for and therefore obstacles to our work. To end them as soon as possible is the only will we can have, not to keep them in existence.

If you could only acquire the power to detach yourself somewhere in you when these storms come, not to be swept away by the push or the thoughts that rise! Then there would be something that could feel the support and be able to react against these forces.

28-6-1935

(21)

It is entirely untrue that Mother was pushing you away today. There may be days when she is absorbed and therefore physically inattentive^a to what her hand is doing. But today she was specially attentive to you and at the Pranam she was putting force on you for peace, tranquillity and the removal of difficulty. If she at all acted by the palm or anything else, it was for that she was acting. About this there can be no mistake, for she was specially conscious of her action and purpose today. What must have happened was that something must have felt the pressure and intervened and persuaded your physical mind by suggestion that it was you

she was pushing away, not the difficulty. This is a very clear instance of how easy it is for the sadhaks to make a wrong inference and think that the Mother is doing the very opposite of what she is doing. Very often when she has concentrated most to help them by pressing out their difficulties, they have written to her "you were very severe and displeased with me this morning". The only way to avoid these wrong reactions is to have full psychic confidence in the Mother, believing that all she does is for their good and out of the Divine Mother's care for them and not against them. Then nothing of this kind will happen. Those who do that, can get the full help of her concentration even if in her absorption she does not touch the hand or smile. That is why I have constantly told the sadhaks not to put their own interpretations on the Mother's appearance or actions at the Pranam—because these interpretations may always be wrong and make an opening for an unfounded depression and an attack.

23-1-1935

(22)

The obsession about the smile and touch has to be overcome and rejected because it has become

an instrument of the contrary forces to upset the sadhaks and hamper their progress. I have seen any number of cases in which the sadhak is going on well or even having high experiences and change of consciousness and suddenly this imagination comes across and all is confusion, revolt, sorrow, despair and the inner work is interrupted and endangered. In most cases this attack brings with it a sensory delusion so that even if the Mother smiles more than usual or gives the blessing with all her force she is told "you did not smile, you did not touch" or "you hardly touched". There have been any number of instances of that also—the Mother telling me, "I saw X disturbed or else a suggestion coming towards him and I gave him my kindest smile and blessing", and yet afterwards we get a letter affirming just the contrary, "you did not smile, etc." And you are all ready to give the Mother the lie, because you felt you saw and your senses cannot be deceived! As if a mind disturbed does not twist the sense observation also! As if it were not a common fact of psychology that one constantly gets an impression according to his mood or thought! Even if the smile or touch were less, it should not be the cause of such reproaches, if there is not an intention in it and there is no intention at all as we have constantly warned all of

you. Of course, the cause is that the sadhaks apply the movements of vital human love to the Mother and the ordinary vital human love is full of contrary movements of distrust, misunderstanding, jealousy, anger, despair. But in Yoga this is most undesirable—for here trust in the Mother, faith in her divine Love is of great importance; anything that denies or disturbs it opens the door to obstacles and wrong reactions. It is not that there should be no love in the vital, but it must purify itself of these reactions and fix itself on the psychic being's trust and confident self-giving. Then there can be the full progress.

29-6-1935

(23)

These things ought to be entirely rejected. When they rise they often twist the consciousness so much as to falsify sometimes the vision itself and always the feeling. The Mother has observed constantly that the people on whom she has smiled tell her she has been glowering and severe or that she has been displeased when there was no displeasure in her and then on the strength of that they go wrong altogether.

10-4-1933

44

Causes of the Mother's Illness

(I)

I had hoped to write shortly, but I have not been able to do so. Therefore, for the moment, since I have promised you this letter in the morning, I can only repeat, on the other matter, that I have not said that you in any degree or the sadhaks generally were the cause of the Mother's illness. To another who wrote something of the kind from the same personal standpoint, I replied that the Mother's illness was due to a struggle with universal forces which far overpassed the scope of any individual or group of individuals. What I wrote about the strain thrown on the Mother by the physical contact was in connection with her resumption of work—and it concerns the conditions under which the work can best be done, so that these forces may not in future have the advantage. Conditions have been particularly arduous in the past owing to the perhaps inevitable development of things, for which I do not hold anyone responsible; but now that the sadhana has come down to the most material plane on which blows can still be given by the adverse forces, it is necessary to make a change which can best be done by a change in the inner attitude of the

sadhaks; for that alone now can make—until the decisive descent of the supramental Light and Force—the external conditions easier. But of this I cannot write at the tail-end of a letter.

16-II-1931

(2)

I have not yet said anything about the Mother's illness because to do so would have needed a long consideration of what those who are at the centre of a work like this have to be, what they have to take upon themselves of human or terrestrial nature and its limitations and how much they have to bear of the difficulties of transformation. All that is not only difficult in itself for the mind to understand but difficult for me to write in such a way as to bring it home to those who have not our consciousness or our experience. I suppose it has to be written but I have not yet found the necessary form or the necessary leisure.

19-II-1931

(3)

It is much easier for the sadhak by faith in the Mother to get free from illness than for the Mother to keep free—because the Mother by the very nature of her work had to identify herself with the sadhaks, to support all their difficulties, to receive into herself all the poison in their nature, to take up besides all the difficulties of the universal earth-nature, including the possibility of death and disease in order to fight them out. If she had not done that, not a single sadhak would have been able to practise this Yoga. The Divine has to put on humanity in order that the human being may rise to the Divine. It is a simple truth, but nobody seems to be able to understand that the Divine can do that and yet remain different from them—can still remain the Divine.

(4)

Q: People in the Ashram believe that their difficulties and illnesses are taken by the Mother on herself and therefore she has sometimes to suffer. But at that rate there would be too much onrush of these things on her from many sadhaks. An idea comes to me of taking upon myself some of these difficulties and illnesses so that I can also suffer with her pleasantly?

A: Pleasantly? It would be anything but pleasant either for you or for us.

It is rather a crude statement of a fact. The Mother in order to do her work had to take all the sadhaks inside her personal being and consciousness; thus personally (not merely impersonally) taken inside, all the disturbances and difficulties in them including illnesses could throw themselves upon her in a way that could not have happened if she had not renounced the self-protection of separateness. Not only illnesses of others could translate themselves into attacks on her body—these she could generally throw off as soon as she knew from what quarter and why it came—but their inner difficulties, revolts, outbursts of anger and hatred against her could have the same and a worse effect. That was the only danger for her (because inner difficulties are easily surmountable), but matter and the body are the weak point or crucial point of our Yoga, since this province has never been conquered by the spiritual Power, the old Yogas having either left it alone or used on it only a detail mental and vital force, not the general spiritual force. It was the reason why after a serious illness caused by a terribly bad state of the Ashram atmosphere, I had to insist on her partial retirement so as to minimise the most concrete part of the pressure upon her.

Naturally, the full conquest of the physical would revolutionise matters, but as yet it is the struggle.

31-3-1934

(5)

Q: Is it not inevitable that in the process of conversion and transformation all these resistances, disturbances, revolts should arise in every sadhak? Could they be eliminated by anyone from the very beginning of his sadhana so that there would be less of these things for the Mother to take upon her own self?

A: The nature of the terrestrial consciousness and of humanity being what it is, these things were to some extent inevitable. It is only a very few who escape with the slighter adverse movements only. But after a time these things should disappear. It does so disappear in individuals—but there seems to be a great difficulty in getting it to disappear from the atmosphere of the Ashram—somebody or other always takes it up and from him it tries to spread to others. It is, of course, because there is behind it one of the principles of life according to the Ignorance—a deeply rooted tendency of vital Nature. But it is the very aim of sadhana to over-

come that and substitute a truer and diviner vital Force.

• 1-4-1934

(6)

What you saw is correct, but if the attitude of the sadhak is the true psychic attitude, then the Mother has not to suffer; she can act on them without anything falling on her.

22-1-1937

• • • (7)

• • • It is due to the impurities of the sadhaks thrown on the Mother.

There seems to be no remedy possible before the physical change. If the Mother puts an inner wall between her and the sadhaks, it would not happen, but then they would be unable to receive anything from her. If all were more careful to come to her with their deepest and highest consciousness, then there would be less chance of these things happening.

(8)

All bad thoughts upon the Mother or throwing of impurities on her may affect her body as she has taken the sadhaks into her consciousness; nor can she send these things back to them as it might hurt them.

17-3-1936

(9)

The danger of helping others is the danger of taking upon oneself their difficulties. If one can keep oneself separated and help, this does not occur. But the tendency in helping is to take the person partially or completely in one's larger self. This is what the Mother has had to do with the sadhaks and the reason why she has sometimes to suffer for one cannot always be on guard against any....

When one is absorbed or in action, there is always the difficulty that the person helped gets the habit of drawing and pulling on your forces instead of leaving it to you to give just what you can and ought to give, and many other smaller possibilities, one who helps, has to face.

(10)

The idea of unburdening desires, imperfections,

impurities, illnesses on the Mother so that she may bear the results instead of the sadhaks is a curious one. I suppose it is an imitation of the Christian ideal of a Christ suffering on the cross for the sake of humanity. But it has nothing to do with the Yoga of transformation.

I-II-1936

*Stopping of Progress due to Bad Thoughts
about the Mother*

It might be charitable to warn X not to listen to imbecile remarks of this kind (about the Mother) from whomsoever they may come, and, if he hears them, to do nothing to propagate them. He had been progressing extremely well because he opened himself to the Mother; but if he allows stupidities like that to enter his mind, it may influence him, close him to the Mother and stop his progress.

As for Y, if he said and thought a thing like that (about the Mother) it explains why he has been suffering in health so much lately. If one makes oneself a mouthpiece of the hostile forces and lends oneself to their falsehoods, it is not surprising that something in him should get out of order.

7-I-1932

IX

SADHANA THROUGH WORK FOR THE MOTHER

Sadhana through the Mother's Work

(1)

Work for the Mother done with the right concentration on her is as much a sadhana as meditation and inner experiences.

(2)

Those who do work for the Mother in all sincerity are prepared by the work itself for the right consciousness even if they do not sit down for meditation or follow any particular practice of Yoga. It is not necessary to tell you how to meditate; whatever is needful will come of itself, if in your work and at all times you are sincere and keep yourself open to the Mother.

Necessity of Work in Integral Yoga

(I)

To go entirely inside in order to have experiences and to neglect the work, the external consciousness, is to be unbalanced, one-sided in the sadhana—for our Yoga is integral; so also to throw oneself outward and live in the external being alone is to be unbalanced, one-sided in the sadhana. One must have the same consciousness in inner experience and outward action and make both full of the Mother.

(2)

It is not well to spend the whole time or the greater part of the time in meditation unless one is very strong in mind—for one gets into the habit of living in an inner world entirely and losing touch with external realities—this brings in a one-sided inharmonious movement and may lead to disturbance of balance. To do both meditation and work and dedicate both to the Mother is the best thing.

6-8-1933

(3)

It is not our experience that by meditation alone it is possible to change the nature, nor has retirement from outward activity and work much profited those who have tried it; in many cases it has been harmful. A certain amount of concentration, an inner aspiration in the heart and an opening of the consciousness to the Mother's presence there and to the descent from above are needed. But without action, without work the nature does not really change; it is there and by contact with men that there is the test of the change in the nature. As for the work one does, there is no higher or lower work; all work is the same provided it is offered to the Mother and done for her and in her power.

6-10-1934

(4)

The Mother does not think that it is good to give up all work and only read and meditate. Work is part of the Yoga and it gives the best opportunity for calling down the Presence, the Light and the

Power into the vital and its activities; it increases also the field and the opportunity of surrender.

It is not enough to remember that the work is the Mother's—and the results also. You must learn to feel the Mother's forces behind you and to open to the inspiration and the guidance. Always to remember by an effort of the mind is too difficult; but if you get into the consciousness in which you feel always the Mother's force in you or supporting you, that is the true thing.

The Mother does not usually give specific advice such as you ask for in regard to the Insurance Company. You must learn to get the true inspiration in the mind's silence.

18-8-1932

(5)

Q: Will those who live in peace and "samatā" but do no work for the Mother or do little work get transformation?

A: No, they do not get transformed at all.

7-5-1933

Two Stages of Union with the Mother's Force

(I)

The feeling that all one does is from the Divine, that all action is the Mother's is a necessary step in experience, but one cannot remain in it—one has to go farther. Those can remain in it who do not want to change the nature, but only to have the experience of the Truth behind it. Your action is according to universal Nature and in that again it is according to your individual nature, and all Nature is a force put out by the Divine Mother for the action of the universe. But as things are it is an action of the Ignorance and the ego; while what we want is an action of the divine Truth unveiled and undeformed by the Ignorance and the ego.

So when you feel that your actions are all done by the force (Shakti) of the Mother, that is the true experience. But the will of the Mother is that all you do should be done not by her force in Nature as now, but her own direct force in the Truth of her nature, the higher divine Nature. So also it was correct, what you thought afterwards, that unless there is this change, the experience that all you do is done by her will cannot be altogether true. So it will not be permanent till then. For if it were permanent now, it might keep you in the lower

action as it does many and prevent or retard the change. What you need as a permanent experience now is that of the Mother's Force working in you in all things to change this ignorant consciousness and nature into her divine consciousness and nature.

It is the same with the truth about the instrument. It is true that each thing is an instrument of the cosmic Shakti, therefore of the Mother. But the aim of the sadhana is to become a conscious and perfect instrument instead of one that is unconscious and therefore imperfect. One can be a conscious and perfect instrument only when one is no longer acting in obedience to the ignorant push of the lower nature but in surrender to the Mother and aware of her higher Force acting within oneself. So here too your intuition was perfectly true.

But all this cannot be done in a day. So you are once more right in not being anxious or uneasy. One must be vigilant, but not anxious and uneasy. The Mother's Force will act and bring the result in its own time, provided one offers all to her and aspires and is vigilant, calling and remembering her at all times, rejecting quietly all that stands in the way of the action of her transforming Force.

Your second view of this was more from the right angle of vision than the first. To say, "it is not I who have to act, so I need not mind", is to

say too much—one has to act in so far as one has to aspire, offer oneself, assent to the Mother's working, reject all else, more and more surrender. All else will be done in time, there is no need for anxiety or depression or impatience.

13-7-1935

(2)

At first one must put one's will in union with the Mother's will knowing that it is an instrument only and that it is the Mother's will behind that alone can give the result. Afterwards when one becomes conscious fully of the Mother's force working within, then the personal will is replaced by the divine.

15-7-1935

(3)

There should be not only a general attitude, but each work should be offered to the Mother so as to keep the attitude a living one all the time. There should be at the time of work no meditation, for that would withdraw the attention from the work, but there should be the constant memory of the One to whom you offer it. This is only a

first process; for when you can have constantly the feeling of a calm being within concentrated in the sense of the Divine Presence while the surface mind does the work, or when you can begin to feel always that it is the Mother's force that is doing the work and you are only a channel or an instrument, then in place of memory there will have begun the automatic constant realisation of Yoga, divine union, in works.

Conditions for Following the Mother's Will

The conditions for following the Mother's Will are to turn to her for Light and Truth and Strength, and aspire that no other force shall influence or lead you, to make no demands or conditions in the vital, to keep a quiet mind ready to receive the Truth, but not insisting on its own ideas and formations,—finally, to keep the psychic awake and in front, so that you may be in a constant contact and know truly what her will is; for the mind and vital can mistake other impulsions and suggestions for the Divine Will, but the psychic once awakened makes no mistake.

A perfect perfection is only possible after supramentalisation; but a relative good working is possible

on the lower planes, if one is in contact with the Divine and careful, vigilant and conscious in mind and vital and body. That is a condition, besides, which is preparatory and almost indispensable for the supreme liberation.

Right Attitude in Work

(I)

Not only in your inward concentration, but in your outward acts and movements you must take the right attitude. If you do that and put everything under the Mother's guidance, you will find that difficulties begin to diminish or are much more easily got over and things become steadily smoother.

In your work and acts you must do the same as in your concentration. Open to the Mother, put them under her guidance, call in the peace, the supporting Power, the protection and, in order that they may work, reject all wrong influences that might come in their way by creating wrong, careless or unconscious movements.

Follow this principle and your whole being will become one, under one rule, in the peace and sheltering Power and Light.

(2)

• The Truth for you is to feel the Divine in you, open to the Mother and work for the Divine till you are aware of her in all your activities. There must be the consciousness of the divine presence in your heart and the divine guidance in your acts. This the psychic being can easily, swiftly, deeply feel if it is fully awake; once the psychic has felt it, it can spread to the mental and vital also.

•

•

•

(3)

Demands should not be made; what you receive freely from the Mother helps you; what you demand or try to impose on her is bound to be empty of her force.

The Mother deals with each person differently according to his true need (not what he himself fancies to be his need) and his progress in the sadhana and his nature.

For you the most effective way to get the strength you need should be to do the work consciously and scrupulously, allowing nothing to interfere with its exact discharge. If you did that, opening yourself at the same time to the Mother in your work,

you would receive more constantly the grace and would come to feel her power doing the work through you; you would thus be able to live constantly with the sense of her presence. If, on the contrary, you allow your fancies or desires to interfere with your work or are careless and negligent, you interrupt the flow of her grace and give room for sorrow and uneasiness and other foreign forces to enter into you. Yoga through work is the easiest and most effective way to enter into the stream of this sadhana.

8-3-1930

(4)

Even the most purely physical and mechanical work cannot be properly done if one accepts incapacity, inertia and passivity. The remedy is not to confine yourself to mechanical work, but to reject and throw off incapacity, passivity and inertia and open yourself to the Mother's force. If vanity, ambition and self-conceit stand in your way, cast them from you. You will not get rid of these things by merely waiting for them to disappear. If you merely wait for things to happen, there is no reason

why they should happen at all. If it is incapacity and weakness that oppose, still, as one opens oneself truly and more and more to the Mother's force, the strength and capacity necessary for the work will be given and will grow in the Adhar.

True Consciousness in Work

(1)

• He should carry on his work and do all things else in the right consciousness, offering all he does to the Mother and keeping in inner touch with her. All work done in that spirit and with that consciousness becomes Karma Yoga and can be regarded as part of his sadhana.

• • •
(2)

What you received and kept in the work is indeed the true basic consciousness of Karma Yoga—the calm consciousness from above supporting and the strength from above doing the work, with that the Bhakti which feels it to be the Mother's Consciousness present and working. You know now by experience what is the secret of Karma Yoga.

15-9-1936

(3)

The advantage of being in the psychic consciousness is that you have the right awareness and its will being in harmony with the Mother's will, you can call in the Mother's force to make the change. Those who live in the mind and the vital are not so well able to do this; they are obliged to use mostly their personal effort and as the awareness and will and force of the mind and vital are divided and imperfect, the work done is imperfect and not definitive. It is only in the Supramental that Awareness, Will, Force are always one movement and automatically effective.

(4)

Q: I am always in touch with the Mother during work. Not only do I remember her but the contact with her remains during work. Her Force constantly flows into the Adhar and the work is done automatically, but swiftly, perfectly, unhesitatingly—without personal anxieties and responsibilities; instead, there is confidence, sureness, strength, calmness. I feel that if I can do work in this attitude, it will be perfect, flawless, the work of the Mother's child, not of an egoistic man. Kindly let me know if I am correct.

.

A: Yes, it is a very good progress and the first step towards the right use of the Power for action.

(5)

Everybody is in the Mother, but one must become conscious of that, not of the work only.

1-4-1935

(6)

This happens when the work is always associated with the Mother's thought, done as an offering to her, with the call to do it through you. All ideas of ego, all association of egoistic feelings with the work must disappear. One begins to feel the Mother's force doing the work; the psychic grows through a certain inner attitude behind the work and the Adhar becomes open both to the psychic intuitions and influences from within and to the descent from above. Then the result of meditation can come through the work itself.

The Basis of the Divine Life

To be entirely sincere means to desire the divine Truth only, to surrender yourself more and more

to the Divine Mother, to reject all personal demand and desire other than this one aspiration, to offer every action in life to the Divine and do it as the work given without bringing in the ego. This is the basis of the divine life.

One cannot become altogether this at once, but if one aspires at all times and calls in always the aid of the Divine Shakti with a true heart and straightforward will, one grows more and more into this consciousness.

Conditions of Perfect Service

(I)

Efface the stamp of ego from the heart and let the love of the Mother take its place. Cast from the mind all insistence on your personal ideas and judgment, then you will have the wisdom to understand her. Let there be no obsession of self-will, ego-drive in the action, love of personal authority, attachment to personal preference, then the Mother's force will be able to act clearly in you and you will get the inexhaustible energy for which you ask and your service will be perfect.

27-II-1940

(2)

Yes, that is the most important thing—to get over ego, anger, personal dislikes, self-regarding sensitiveness, etc. Work is not only for work's sake, but as a field of sadhana, for getting rid of the lower personality and its reactions and acquiring a full surrender to the Divine. As for the work itself, it must be done according to the organisation arranged or sanctioned by the Mother. You must always remember that it is her work and not personally yours.

23-3-1935

(3)

I can only repeat what I have already written whenever these circumstances and feelings come to you. To leave your work is not a solution—it is through work that one can detect and progressively get rid of the feelings and movements that are contrary to the Yogic ideal—those of the ego.

Work should be done for the Mother and not for oneself,—that is how one encourages the growth of the psychic being and overcomes the ego. The test is to do the work given by the Mother without

abhimān or insistence or personal choice or prestige, —not getting hurt by anything that touches the pride, *amour-propre* or personal preference.

It is a high and great ideal that is put before the sadhak through work and it is not possible to realise it suddenly, but to grow steadily into it is possible, if one keeps the aim always before one—to be a selfless and perfectly tempered instrument for the work of the Divine Mother.

28-9-1935

The Impersonal Worker

(I)

To be impersonal generally is not to be ego-centric, not to regard things from the point of view of how they affect oneself, but to see what things are in themselves, to judge impartially, to do what is demanded by the purpose of things or by the will of the Master of things, not by one's own personal point of view or egoistic interest or ego-formed idea or feeling. In work it is to do what is best for the work, without regard to one's own prestige or convenience, not to regard the work

as one's own but as the Mother's, to do it according to rule, discipline, impersonal arrangement, even if conditions are not favourable to do the best according to the conditions, etc., etc. The impersonal worker puts his best capacity, zeal, industry into the work, but not his personal ambitions, vanity, passions. He has always something in view that is greater than his little personality and his devotion or obedience to that dictates his conduct.

29-6-1935

(2)

It would be dangerous to take every "inner prompting" as if it were a prompting or initiation of action from the Mother. What seems an inner prompting may come from anywhere, any force good or bad seeking to fulfil itself.

One may have ego about the work even if the work itself comes from the Mother. The ego of the instrument is one of the things against which there must be special care in the Yoga.

When one is doing the work, usually the urge of the force that works and the preoccupation of doing it and getting it done or the pleasure of doing

it are sufficient and the mind does not think of anything else. Afterwards the sense of "I did it" comes up. With some, however, the ego is active during the work itself.

3-11-1935

(3)

Of course it is a way. But one has still to be careful about the ego. Even people who are sincerely thinking that they are doing only the Mother's work are yet attached by ego without knowing it.

4-4-1936

Profit from Difficulties in Work

(1)

I am glad of your resolution. The greater the difficulties that rise in the work the more one can profit by them in deepening the equality, if one takes it in the right spirit. You must also keep yourself open to receive the help towards that, for the help will always be coming from the Mother for the change of the nature.

29-9-1935

(2)

Do not allow yourself to be grieved or discouraged. Human beings have unfortunately the habit of being unkind to each other. But if you do your work in all sincerity, the Mother will be satisfied and all the rest will come afterwards.

(3)

You need not mind X's quick temper. Remind yourself always it is Mother's work you are doing and if you do it as well as you can remembering her, the Mother's Grace will be with you. That is the right spirit for the worker, and if you do it in that spirit, a calm consecration will come.

1-3-1933

Action from Inner Communion with the Mother

(1)

You must gather yourself within more firmly. If you disperse yourself constantly, go out of the inner circle, you will constantly move about in the pettinesses of the ordinary outer nature and under the influences to which it is open. Learn to live

within, to act always from within, from a constant communion with the Mother. It may be difficult at first to do it always and completely, but it can be done if one sticks to it—and it is at that price, by learning to do that, that one can have the siddhi in the Yoga.

5-6-1934

(2)

When things become confused outside, you must fix on your mind at once the rule of not judging by appearances—refer all to the Mother's Light within with the confidence that all will be clear.

The Mother says that if at any time you feel too much strain of work, you must tell her at once so that she may see what to do.

16-9-1933

*Openness to the Mother's Force in Work and
Need of Rest*

(1)

In the ordinary condition of the body if you oblige

the body to do too much work, it can do with the support of vital force. But as soon as the work is done, the vital force withdraws and then the body feels fatigue. If this is done too much and for too long a time, there may be a breakdown of health and strength under the overstrain. Rest is then needed for recovery.

If, however, the mind and the vital get the habit of opening to the Mother's Force, they are then supported by the Force and may even be fully filled with it—the Force does the work and the body feels no strain or fatigue before or after. But even then, unless the body itself is open and can absorb and keep the Force, sufficient rest in between the work is absolutely necessary. Otherwise, although the body may go on for a very long time, yet in the end there can be a danger of a collapse.

The body can be sustained for a long time when there is the full influence and there is a single-minded faith and call in the mind and the vital; but if the mind or the vital is disturbed by other influences or opens itself to forces which are not the Mother's, then there will be a mixed condition and there will be sometimes strength, sometimes fatigue, exhaustion or illness or a mixture of the two at the same time.

Finally, if not only the mind and the vital, but the

body also is open and can absorb the Force, it can do extraordinary things in the way of work without breaking down. Still even then rest is necessary. That is why we insist on those who have the impulse of work keeping a proper balance between rest and labour.

A complete freedom from fatigue is possible, but that comes only when there is a complete transformation of the law of the body by the full descent of a supramental Force into the earth-nature.

(2)

This is the thing that used to happen daily to the physical workers in the Ashram. Working with immense energy and enthusiasm with a passion for the work they might after a time feel tired, then they would call the Mother and a sense of rest came into them and with or after it a flood of energy so that twice the amount of work could be done without the least fatigue or reaction. In many there was a spontaneous call of the vital for the Force, so that they felt the flood of energy as soon as they began the work and it continued so long as the work had to be done.

Vital Energy in Work

Don't be afraid of vital energy in work. Vital energy is an invaluable gift of God without which nothing can be done—as the Mother has always insisted from the beginning; it is given that His work may be done. I am very glad that it has come back, the cheerfulness and optimism with it. That is as it should be.

'Need of Mastery in Work

Mother does not disapprove of your writing a book—what she does not like is your being so lost in it that you can do nothing else. You must be master of what you do and not possessed by it. She quite agrees to your finishing and offering the book on your birthday if that can be done. But you must not be carried away—you must keep your full contact with higher things.

1-5-1934

Propaganda Work for the Mother

Mother does not set much value on propaganda, but still work of that kind can be her work. Only

it has to come from her impulsion, be done with quietude, with measure, in the way she wants it to be done. It is from the inner being that it should be done in union with the Mother's will, not from the vital mind's eager impulse. To concentrate most on one's own spiritual growth and experience is the first necessity of the sadhak—to be eager to help others draws away from the inner work. To grow in the spirit is the greatest help one can give to others, for then something flows out naturally to those around that helps them.

9-4-1937

X

THE MOTHER'S HELP IN DIFFICULTIES

Assurance of Victory

Be sure that the Mother will always be with you to carry you upon the path. Difficulties come and difficulties go, but, she being with you, the victory is sure.

18-7-1936

Faith in the Mother's Working

(1)

One has to cleave firmly to the faith in the Mother's working behind all appearances and you will find that that will carry you through.

31-8-1935

(2)

It is the true attitude to leave all to the Mother and trust entirely in her and let her lead you on the path to the goal.

2-3-1936

(3)

It is not by his own strength or good qualities that anyone can attain the divine change; there are only two things that matter, the Mother's force at work and the sadhak's will to open to it and trust in her working. Keep your will and your trust and care nothing for the rest—they are only difficulties that all meet in their sadhana.

13-5-1936

(4)

Nothing is impossible if the nature of the psychic being is awake and leading you with the Mother's consciousness and force behind it and working in you.

19-10-1935

(5)

If one remains in full confidence in the Mother and psychically open, then the Mother's force will do all and one has only to give consent and keep oneself open and aspire.

12-11-1935

(6)

Whether the progress is rapid or slow, the attitude should always be an entire faith and reliance on the Mother; just as you do not think that the progress was the result of your own effort or merit but of your taking the right attitude of reliance and the Mother's force working, so you should not think that any slowness or difficulty was due to your own demerit but only seek to keep this attitude of reliance and let the Mother's Force work—slowly or rapidly does not matter.

14-11-1935

(7)

No. It is perhaps how some part of the vital or physical consciousness figured it. But the path is

not a desert nor are you alone, since the Mother is with you.

2-11-1933

The Mother's Positive Attitude

(1)

Mother never thinks of future difficulties, falls or dangers. Her concentration is always on love and light, not on difficulties and downfalls.

(2)

It is the higher reality that Mother brings into the world—without it all else is ignorant and false.

3-8-1934

The One Thing to do Always

Once one has entered the path of Yoga, there is only one thing to do, to fix oneself in the resolution to go to the end whatever happens, whatever difficulties arise. None really gets the fulfilment in

Yoga by his own capacity—it is by the greater Force that stands over you that it will come—and it is the call, persistent through all vicissitudes, to that Force, by which the fulfilment will come. Even when you cannot aspire actively, keep yourself turned to the Mother for the help to come—that is the one thing to do always.

3-1-1934

(2)

Everyone who is turned to the Mother is doing my Yoga. It is a great mistake to suppose that one can “do” the Purna Yoga—i. e. carry out and fulfil all the sides of the Yoga by one’s own effort. No human being can do that. What one has to do is to put oneself in the Mother’s hands and open oneself to her by service, by bhakti, by aspiration; then the Mother by her light and force works in him so that the sadhana is done. It is a mistake also to have the ambition to be a big Purna Yogi or a supramental being and ask oneself how far have I got towards that. The right attitude is to be devoted and given to the Mother and to wish to be whatever she wants you to be. The rest is for the Mother to decide and do in you.

April, 1935

(3)

There is one thing everybody should remember that everything should be done from the point of view of Yoga, of sadhana, of growing into a divine life in the Mother's consciousness. To insist upon one's own mind and its ideas, to allow oneself to be governed by one's own vital feelings and reactions should not be the rule of life here. One has to stand back from these, to be detached, to get in their place the true knowledge from above, the true feelings from the psychic within. This cannot be done if the mind and vital do not surrender, if they do not renounce their attachment to their own ignorance which they call truth, right, justice. All the trouble rises from that; if that were overcome, the true basis of life, of work, of harmony, of all in the union with the Divine would more and more replace the trouble and difficulty of the present.

Trust in the Mother's Force in Difficulty

(1)

What is needed is perseverance—to go on without discouragement, recognising that the process of the nature and the action of the Mother's force is

working through the difficulty even and will do all that is needed. Our incapacity does not matter —there is no human being who is not in his parts of nature incapable—but the Divine Force is also there. If one puts one's trust in that, incapacity will be changed into capacity. Difficulty and struggle themselves then become a means towards the achievement.

27-5-1936

(2)

Never allow this idea "I am not able", "I am not doing enough" to come and vex you; it is a tamasic suggestion and brings depression and depression opens the way to the attacks of the wrong forces. Your position should be, "Let me do what I can; the Mother's force is there, the Divine is there to see that in due time all will be done."

4-11-1935

(3)

Not to be disturbed, to remain quiet and confident is the right attitude, but it is necessary also to receive the help of the Mother and not to stand back

for any reason from her solicitude. One ought not to indulge ideas of incapacity, inability to respond, dwelling too much on defects and failures and allowing the mind to be in pain and shame on their account; for these ideas and feelings become in the end weakening things. If there are difficulties, stumblings or failures, one has to look at them quietly and call in tranquilly and persistently the Divine help for their removal, but not to allow oneself to be upset or pained or discouraged. Yoga is not an easy path and the total change of the nature cannot be done in a day.

(4)

This kind of grief and despondency are the worst obstacles one can raise up in the sadhana—they ought not to be indulged in. What one cannot do oneself one can get done by calling the Mother's force. To receive that and let it work in you is the true means of success in the sadhana.

(5)

Whatever difficulties still remain, be sure that they will be surmounted. There is no need for the

outer being to be nervous—the Mother's Force and the devotion within you will be sufficient to overcome all that stands in the way.

(6)

There is no reason to be discouraged. Three years is not too much for the preparation of the nature and it is usually through fluctuations that it gradually grows nearer to the point where a continuous progress becomes possible. One has to cleave firmly to the faith in the Mother's working behind all appearances and you will find that that will carry you through.

31-8-1935

(7)

You should not yield to sorrow or despair—there is no reason why you should. The Mother's grace has not been withdrawn from you for a moment. Do not allow the attacks of others to shake you like this—you know well the motives from which they act—and for the rest they are not going to pursue any farther the course which a fit of passion dictated to them. The protection will be with you and you

need not fear or sorrow any longer. Put your trust in the Divine and shake off all this like a nightmare that has passed. Believe that our love and grace are with you.

(8)

There has always been too much reliance on the action of your own mind and will—that is why you cannot progress. If you could once get the habit of silent reliance on the power of the Mother—not merely calling it in to support your own effort—the obstacle would diminish and eventually disappear.

(9)

The more one is open to the Mother's action, the more easily difficulties get solved and the right thing is done.

21-9-1934

(10)

It was by your personal efforts without guidance that you got into difficulties and into a heated condi-

tion in which you could not meditate etc. I asked you to drop the effort and remain quiet and you did so. My intention was that by your remaining quiet, it would be possible for the Mother's Force to work in you and establish a better starting-point and a course of initial experiences. It was what was beginning to come; but if your mind again becomes active and tries to arrange the sadhana for itself, then disturbances are likely to come. The Divine Guidance works best when the psychic is open and in front (yours was beginning to open), but it can also work even when the sadhak is either not conscious of it, or else knows it only by its results.

Existence of Difficulties and the Mother's Grace

(I)

Q: Can it be believed that the Mother's Grace is acting even when the difficulties do not disappear?

A: In that case everybody might say, "All my difficulties must disappear at once, I must attain to perfection immediately and without difficulties, otherwise it proves that the Mother's Grace is not with me."

20-7-1933

(2)

You must throw all that away. Such depressions can make you shut to what Mother is giving you. There is absolutely no good reason for such an attitude. The existence of difficulties is a known thing in the Yoga. That is no reason for questioning the final victory or the effectuality of the Divine Grace.

4-2-1933

Psychic Development and the Mother's Grace

(1)

Q: What is the Law of the working of the Mother's Grace?

A: The more one develops the psychic, the more is it possible for the Grace to act.

13-8-1933

(2)

What has to be gained is the constant prominence of that part which is always aware of the Mother

—it is of course the psychic—for that though it can be covered over for the time being cannot be misled by the contrary suggestions. Once it is awake, it always re-emerges from obscurity—that is the guarantee of the final arrival at the goal, but if it can be maintained in front or even consciously felt behind in all conditions, then the stages of the way also become comparatively safe and can be passed with greater ease and security.

• 6-2-1937

(3)

It is when there is no attachment to outward things for their own sake and all is only for the Mother and the life through the inner psychic being is centred in her that the best condition is created for the spiritual realisation.

11-11-1935

The Mother's Constant Help

(1)

The Mother's help is always there but you are not conscious of it except when the psychic is active

and the consciousness not clouded. The coming of suggestions is not a proof that the help is not there. Suggestions come to all, even to the greatest sadhaks or to the Avatars—as they came to Buddha or Christ. Obstacles are there—they are part of Nature and they have to be overcome. What has to be attained is not to accept the suggestions, not to admit them as the truth or as one's own thoughts, to see them for what they are and keep oneself separate. Obstacles have to be looked at as something wrong in the machinery of human nature which has to be changed—they should not be regarded as sins or wrong doings which make one despair of oneself and of the sadhana.

(2)

Q: Today while engaged in work I felt a peaceful energy and something like ice touching my head. Then the knowledge came to me with a strong feeling and vision that though the Mother is not physically near us, she is always present near and around us and is constantly removing all kinds of difficulties with the touch of her affectionate hand. Was this a vision or realisation? Through what consciousness did it come to me?

A: It is a realisation attended with vision and feeling. It is psychic and the mental together that produced it.

11-6-1933

Change of Vital with the Mother's Help

(1)

The Mother's help is always there for those who are willing to receive it. But you must be conscious of your vital nature, and the vital nature must consent to change. It is no use merely observing that it is unwilling and that, when thwarted, it creates depression in you. Always the vital nature is not at first willing and always when it is thwarted or asked to change, it creates this depression by its revolt or refusal of consent. You have to insist till it recognises the truth and is willing to be transformed and to accept the Mother's help and grace. If the mind is sincere and the psychic aspiration complete and true, the vital can always be made to change.

15-7-1932

(2)

It is this idea that you are helpless because the vital consents to the wrong movement that comes in the way. You have to put your inner will and the Mother's light on the vital so that it shall change, not leave it to do what it likes. If one is to be "helpless" and moved by any part of the instrumental being, how is change possible? The Mother's force or the psychic can act, but on condition that the assent of the being is there. If the vital is left to do what it likes, it will always go after its old habits; it has to be made to feel that it must change.

(3)

What is still restless in the vital has to quiet down for the peace of mind to be even and constant. It has to be controlled, but only control will not be enough. The Mother's Power has to be called always.

10-4-1934

(4)

Put the Mother's notice henceforth at the door of your vital being, "No falsehood hereafter shall

ever enter here", and station a sentry there to see that it is put into execution.

18-5-1933

Straightforwardness and the Mother's Help

Those who are not straightforward cannot profit by the Mother's help, for they themselves turn it away. Unless they change, they cannot hope for the descent of the supramental Light and Truth into the lower vital and physical nature; they remain stuck in their own self-created mud and cannot progress.

November, 1928

Calling the Mother in Difficulty

(I)

When difficulties arise, remain quiet within and call down the Mother's force to remove them.

26-8-1933

(2)

To call to the Mother always is the main thing and with that to aspire and assent to the Light when it comes, to reject and detach oneself from desire and any dark movement. But if one cannot do these other things successfully, then call and still call.

The Mother's force is there with you even when you do not feel it; remain quiet and persevere.

15-9-1934

(3)

There is only one way if you cannot exert your will—it is to call the Force; even the call only with the mind or the mental word is better than being extremely passive and submitted to the attack,—for although it may not succeed instantaneously, the mental call even ends by bringing the Force and opening up the consciousness again. For everything depends upon that. In the externalised consciousness obscurity and suffering can always be there; the more the internalised consciousness reigns, the more these things are pushed back and out, and with the full internalised consciousness they cannot remain—if

they come, it is as outside touches unable to lodge themselves in the being.

• 21-8-1933

(4)

• Even when one cannot call in actively the Mother's Force one must keep the reliance that it will come.

• 26-8-1936

(5)

• It is the physical mind that feels too inert—
but if some part of the being turns to the Mother,
that is enough to bring the help.

• 25-1-1934

(6)

It is an obsession from the subconscious physical bringing back the habitual thoughts, "I can't call rightly—I have no real aspiration, etc."; the depression, the memory, etc. are from the same source.

It is no use indulging in these ideas. If you cannot call the Mother in what you think the right way, call her in any way—if you can't call her, think of her with the will to be rid of these things. Don't worry yourself with the idea whether you have true aspiration or not—the psychic being wants and that is sufficient. The rest is for the Divine Grace on which one must steadfastly rely—one's own merit, virtue or capacity is not the thing that brings the realisation.

I shall send the force to rid you of this obsession in any case, but if you can abandon these habitual ideas, it will make the disappearance of the attack easier.

4-I-1937

(7)

It is always best in these difficulties to tell the Mother and call for her help. It is probably something in his vital that needs somebody to protect and care for—but you must accustom yourself to the idea that it is not needed and the best thing is to give the person to the care of the Mother—offer the object of your affection to her.

15-II-1937

Removal of Recurring Difficulties

(1)

Q: What is the right way of meeting one's recurring difficulties?

A: Equality, rejection, calling on the Mother's force.

• 1-8-1933

(2)

What stands in the way is the recurring circle of the old mixture. To break out of that is very necessary to arrive at an inner Yogic calm and peace not disturbed by these things. If that is established, it will be possible to feel in it the Mother's Presence, to open to her guidance, to get, not by occasional glimpses but in a steady opening and flowering, the psychic perception and the descent of the spiritual Light and Ananda. For that help will be with you.

7-3-1937

(3)

Plenty of people have this condition (it is human nature) and there is naturally a way of coming out

of it—having full faith in the Mother to quiet the inner mind (even if the outer continues to be troublesome) and call in it the Mother's peace and Force, which is always there above you, into the Adhar. Once that is there, consciously, to keep yourself open to it and let it go on working with a full adhesion, with a constant support of your consent, with a conscious rejection of all that is not that, till all the inner being is tranquillised and filled with the Mother's Force, Peace, Joy, Presence—then the outer nature will be obliged to follow suit in its turn.

8-5-1933

Recovery from Bad Conditions

(I)

These bad conditions are a lapse (often due to a very slight cause) from the inner poise to the outer consciousness. When they happen do not get affected, but remain quiet, call the Mother and get back inward.

24-1-1936

(2)

• An occasional sinking of the consciousness happens to everybody. The causes are various, some touch from outside, something not yet changed or not sufficiently changed in the vital, especially the lower vital, some inertia or obscurity rising up from the physical parts of nature. When it comes, remain quiet, open yourself to the Mother and call back the true conditions and aspire for a clear and undisturbed discrimination showing you from within yourself the cause of the thing that needs to be set right.

• 4-3-1932

The Mother's Help in Attacks

(1)

It is the forces of the Ignorance that begin to lay siege and then make a mass attack. Every time such an attack can be defeated and cast out, there is a clearance in the Adhar, a new field gained for the Mother in the mind, vital or physical or the adjacent

parts of the being. That the place in the vital occupied by the Mother is increasing is shown by the fact that you are now offering a strong resistance to these sieges that used formerly to overpower you altogether.

To be able to call the Mother's presence or force at such times is the best way to meet the difficulty.

It is with the Mother who is always with you and in you that you converse. The only thing is to hear aright, so that no other voice can come in between.

7-12-1933

(2)

However strong the attack may be, and even if it overcomes you for the time being, still it will rapidly pass away if you have formed the habit of opening to the Mother. The peace will come back if you remain quiet and keep yourself open to it and to the Force. Once something of the Truth has shown itself within you, it will always, even if for a time heavily clouded over with wrong movements, shine out again like the sun in heaven. Therefore persevere with confidence and never lose courage.

14-3-1932

(3)

Q: What is the best means for the sadhaks to avoid suffering due to the action of the hostile forces?

A: Faith in the Mother and complete surrender.

17-6-1933

(4)

Q: When the sadhaks overlook some weakness of their nature in the process of transformation, is it not possible that it will be shown to them by the Divine Mother rather than through a painful wound at the weak point dealt by the hostile forces?

A: If they are sufficiently open to the Divine it can be done—but most sadhaks have too much egoism and lack of faith and obscurity and self-will and vital desires,—it is that that shuts them to the Mother and calls in the action of the hostile forces.

17-6-1933

(5)

The play of the mental and vital defects in the

human nature which belongs to the Ignorance is allowed—as also the attacks and suggestions of the Asuric forces—so long as there is anything in the nature which responds to these things. If they rise in you in the presence of the Mother, it is because then a strong pressure is put on them so that they have either to go out or to put up a fight for existence. The remedy is to open to the Mother only and to reject entirely and at all times all other forces, and to reject them most when they become most active. Faith, sincerity, perseverance will do the rest.

16-11-1932

Testing by the Mother

The idea of tests also is not a healthy idea and ought not to be pushed too far. Tests are applied not by the Divine but by the forces of the lower planes—mental, vital, physical—and allowed by the Divine because that is part of the soul's training and helps it to know itself, its powers and limitations it has to outgrow. The Mother is not testing you at every moment, but rather helping

you at every moment to rise beyond the necessity of tests and difficulties which belong to the inferior consciousness. To be always conscious of that help will be your best safeguard against all attacks whether of adverse powers or of your own lower nature.

Ways of Giving Help

Help is given in whatever way is necessary or possible. It is not limited to Force, Light, Knowledge. Of course, if by Force etc. you mean anything or everything then the formula holds.

• 22-12-1936 •

Help and Automatic Action of Force

The need for calling help diminishes, as one gets higher and higher or rather fuller and fuller, being replaced more and more by the automatic action of the Force.

22-12-1936

Rejection of Difficulties by Inward Surrender

To come physically to the Mother for getting rid of a disturbance is unnecessary and useless; it is inwardly that you must take refuge in her and throw away the wrong movement, as you have seen on this occasion. To come physically would only create a habit of getting wrong and coming to her to get right and it would also lead to the wrong movement of throwing the difficulty on her instead of inwardly giving it up, rendering its surrender. But it is a general surrender that is needed which could prevent these useless disturbances over trifling matters, egoisms, insistences on one's own point of view, anger because one does not have one's own way or a due recognition of one's independence or importance.

Writing to the Mother for Help

(I)

You did well to speak to X and also to write to the Mother. Of course, Mother had observed X's difficulties; it is correct that the difficulty is the lack of a certain free opening—otherwise all that could

be removed quickly and the necessary change of nature (mind, ego, etc.) carried on by smooth gradation. To write as you do is helpful for opening oneself and for receiving the precise touch. X's logic about the Mother's knowing and therefore there being no need to write is applicable if there is a free or at least a sufficient flow of giving and reception between the Mother and the sadhak, but when a serious difficulty comes, this logic is not so applicable. Naturally, we shall do our best to help him in his struggle.

14-5-1936

(2)

One rule for you I can lay down, "Do not do, say or think anything which you would want to conceal from the Mother". And that answers the objections that rose within you—from your vital, is it not?—against bringing "these petty things" to the Mother's notice. Why should you think that the Mother would be bothered by these things or regard them as petty? If *all* the life is to be Yoga, what is there that can be called petty or of no importance? Even if the Mother does not answer, to have brought any matter of your action and self-

development before her in the right spirit means to have put it under her protection, in the light of the Truth, under the rays of the Power that is working for the transformation—for immediately those rays begin to play and to act on the thing brought to her notice. Anything within that advises not to do it when the spirit in you moves you to do it, may very well be a device of the vital to avoid the ray of the Light and the working of the Force.

18-5-1932

*The Mother's Occult Action for Answering
Calls for Help*

As to the experience, certainly X's call for help did reach the Mother, even though all the details she relates in her letter might not have been present to the Mother's physical mind. Always calls of this kind are coming to the Mother, sometimes a hundred close upon each other and always the answer is given. The occasions are of all kinds, but whatever the need that occasions the call, the Force is there to answer it. That is the principle of this action on the occult plane. It is not of the same kind as an ordinary human action and does not need a written or oral communication on the one who calls; an

interchange of psychic communication is quite sufficient to set the Force at work. At the same time it is not an impersonal Force and the suggestion of a divine energy that is there ready to answer and satisfy anybody who calls it is not at all relevant here. It is something personal to the Mother and if she had not this power and this kind of action she would not be able to do her work; but this is quite different from the outside practical working on the material plane where the methods must, necessarily, be different, although the occult working and the material working can and do join and the occult power give to the material working its utmost efficacy. As for the one who is helped not feeling the force at work, his knowing might help very substantially the effective working, but it need not be indispensable; the effect can be there even if he does not know how the thing is done. For instance, in your work in Calcutta and elsewhere my help has always been with you and I don't think it can be said that it was ineffective; but it was of the same occult nature and could have had the same effect even if you had not been conscious in some way that my help was with you.

24-3-1949

48

The Mother's Protection of the Sadhaks

The Mother has made an arrangement with a view to all the occult forces and the best possible conditions for the protection of the sadhaks from certain forces of death, disease, etc. It cannot work perfectly because the sadhaks themselves have not the right attitude towards food and kindred vital physical things. But still there is a protection. If, however, the sadhaks go outside her formation, it must be on their own responsibility....But this arrangement is for the Ashram and not for those who are outside.

14-7-1933

(2)

It is not because the Mother has withdrawn her protection—she has not done that. It is more likely that it (the difficulty) came because you have been going too much out of your inner being and externalising yourself. It is better to draw back within again and recover the inner calm and peace.

Accidents and the Mother's Protection

Q: X had a car accident this morning. Could Mother

not see the possibility of this accident beforehand and prevent it? Or was it because X had in some manner gone out of the zone of her protection?

A: It was not possible to prevent the accident. When the danger comes a call to the Mother is the first thing to be done, that makes the general protection at once effective. X was in too externalised a state to do that and he did the very opposite thing to what should have been done—trying to get away in front of the car instead of behind it. But the true cause was something more internal—one of those choices made by the inner being (not necessarily known to the conscious mind) which bring these things as a response.

27-1-1936

The Mother's Protection on the Vital Plane

(I)

It was a dream of the vital plane where all kinds of dangers occur until you get courage to face them. If there is no fear or if there is the protection of

the Mother (which becomes manifest by remembering or calling her) then these dangers come to nothing. It is the fear of mad men that brought the thing in the vital; such things as this fear have to be thrown out of the nature.

8-9-1933

(2)

What happened in your experience was that the vital being got free from the body through its desire to unite with the Mother (you met the Mother on the borders between the vital and physical) and lived with its own life independent of the body. It entered into the vital world and, not being sheltered any longer in the body, felt helpless at first, till it called the Mother. The appearance of X there might possibly have been some part of the vital of X himself, but was more probably a vital being in his shape, perhaps the very vital being who has been troubling him. When you go into the vital world, you meet many such things,—the one sufficient protection is to call the Mother.

7-9-1933

*Working of the Mother's Force for
Physical Cure*

(I)

The inherent strength of the body does not do things like that. It is the Mother's force that does it, when one calls and opens oneself. Even people who never did Yoga and are conscious of nothing, get cured like that without knowing the reason or feeling the way in which it was done. The force comes from above or in descending it envelopes and comes from without inside or it comes out from inside after descending there. When you are conscious of the play of the forces, then you feel the working.

It (awakening) means the conscious action of the psychic from behind. When it comes to the front it invades the mind and vital and body and psychicises their movements. It comes best by aspiration and an unquestioning and entire turning and surrender to the Mother. But also it sometimes comes of itself when the Adhar is ready.

5-5-1933

(2)

It is a fact of my experience that when the resistance in the body is too strong and persistent, it can help to take some aid of physical means as an instrumentation for the Force to work more directly on the body itself; for the body then feels itself supported against the resistance from both sides, by means both physical as well as supra-physical. The Mother's force can work through both together.

I-9-1936

(3)

Q: Since more than a fortnight every time I receive the Mother's touch at Pranam time I feel a sense of strong nourishment accompanied by joy and strength, as if a new substance is being poured down even in my physical body.

A: As you suffer from ill-health, Mother presses the nourishment of the divine strength and health into your physical being, renewing its substance with that.

4-II-1934

XI

EXPLANATIONS OF SOME VIEWS OF THE MOTHER ETC.

The Mother's Prayers

Q: In some of the Mother's Prayers¹ which are addressed to 'divin Maître' I find the words: "avec notre divine Mère". How can the Mother and 'divin Maître' have a 'divine Mère'? It is as if the Mother was not the 'divine Mère' and there was some other Mother and the 'divin Maître' was not the Transcendent and had a 'divine Mère'! Or is it that all these Prayers are addressed to something impersonal?

A: The Prayers are mostly written in an identification with the earth-consciousness. It is the Mother in the lower nature addressing the Mother in the higher nature, the Mother herself carrying on the sadhana of the earth-consciousness for the transformation praying to herself above from whom the forces of transformation come. This continues till

¹ *Prayers and Meditations of the Mother*

the identification of the earth-consciousness and the higher consciousness is effected. The word "notre" is general, I believe, referring to all born into the earth-consciousness—it does not mean the Mother of the "Divin Maître" and myself. It is the Divine who is always referred to as Divin Maître and Seigneur. There is the Mother, who is carrying on the sadhana, and the Divine Mother, both being one but in different poises, and both turn to the Seigneur or Divine Master. This kind of prayer from the Divine to the Divine you will find also in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

21-8-1936

The Mother's View of Cheerfulness

As for light-heartedness and insouciance—a light don't-care attitude is the last thing we would recommend to anybody. The Mother spoke of cheerfulness, and if she used the word light-hearted, it was not in the sense of anything lightly or frivolously gay and careless—although a deeper and finer gaiety can have its place as an element of the Yogic character. What she meant was a glad equanimity even in the face of difficulties and there is

nothing in that contrary to Yogic teaching or to her own practice. The vital nature on the surface (the depths of the true vital are different) is attached on the one side to a superficial mirth and enjoyment, on the other to sorrow and despair and gloom and tragedy,—for these are for it the cherished lights and shades of life; but a bright or wide and free peace or an *ānandamaya* intensity or, best, a fusing of both in one is the true poise of both the soul and the mind—and of the true vital also—in Yoga. It is perfectly possible for a quite human sadhak to get to such a poise, it is not necessary to be divine before one can attain it.

The Mother's View of Jealousy

Only one thing I must note so that no wrong idea may linger in your understanding. You seem to say in one passage of a letter that the Mother had said to you that jealousy is inevitable in true love in ordinary life, and if it is not there when one sees the other loving elsewhere, then they don't love each other! You must have strangely misheard and misunderstood the Mother. It is just the opposite of what the Mother has always said and thought and the very contrary of all her knowledge

and experience. It is the idea of the ordinary mind about jealousy and love, not hers. She remembers very well having told you just the opposite that, even in ordinary life, one is *not* jealous if one has the true love. Jealousy is the common movement of the human egoistic lower vital with its grasping possessive instinct and it cannot be anything else. I thought it better to make this clear so that there might be no misleading impression that such movements of the lower vital nature have any sanction or support in the truth of the soul; they belong to the vital Ignorance, they are fruits of the vital ego.

1-2-1933

Spiritual Experience and Excitement

Q: In her book "Conversations", the Mother says: "One who dances and jumps and screams has the feeling that he is somehow very unusual in his excitement; and his vital nature takes great pleasure in that." Does she mean that one should be usual instead of unusual in one's excitement during spiritual experience?

A: The Mother did not mean that one must be usual in one's excitement at all—she meant that the man is not only excited but also wants to be unusual (extraordinary) in his excitement. The excitement itself is bad and the desire to seem extraordinary is worse.

7-6-1933

Faculty of Getting Right Perceptions

X has reported Mother's observation correctly, but he does not seem to have understood it. The Mother never meant that by merely willing one could know at once what was in someone else or that all one's impressions about him would be spontaneously and infallibly correct. What she meant was that there is a faculty or power (an occult or Yogic faculty) by which one may get the right perceptions and impressions, and if one has the will to do so, one can develop it. Not at once, not by an easy method—*tra la la* and there you are: it may take years and one has to be careful and scrupulous about it. For these are intuitive perceptions and intuition is a thing that can easily be

imitated by many other movements of consciousness that are much more fallible. Your impressions may be mental or vital and a mental or vital impression may have something to justify it or may not—but even in the first case there is no certainty at all that it will be correct; even if it is the same thing, it may be incorrectly caught—or caught with much mixture of error, twisted into falsehood, put in the wrong way, etc. And there may be no justification at all; it may be a mere wrong formation of your own mind or vital or of somebody else's wrong impression conveyed to you and accepted by you as your own. Your impressions may be the result of a want of affinity between you and the person, so that if he impresses you as null and neutral, it is because you cannot feel what is in him, it does not come home to you, or if you feel that he is in the wrong condition, it may be only because his vital intuitions rub yours the wrong way. There are lots of things like that which one must have the power to distinguish very carefully and exactly; until one knows one's own consciousness and its operations well, one cannot know the operations of the consciousness of others. But it is possible to develop a certain direct sight or a certain direct feeling or contact by which one can know, but only after much time and much careful, scrupulous and vigilant observation

and self-training. Till then one can't go about saying that this is an advanced sadhak or that one is not advanced and that other is no good at all. Even if one knows, it is not necessary always to air one's knowledge.

9-2-1935

Trick of Reversing the Consciousness

" When the Mother said that it was just a trick of reversing the consciousness, she meant that: that instead of allowing always the external mind to interfere and assert its own ordinary customary point of view, it should turn itself round, admit that things may work from in outwards, and keep itself sufficiently quiet to see that developing and being done. For then an inner mind shows itself which is capable of following and being the instrument of the invisible Forces.

2-8-1932

An Occult Experiment of the Mother

X probably referred to an experience in which

the Mother being in Algiers appeared to a circle of friends sitting in Paris and took up a pencil and wrote a few words on a paper. Having satisfied herself that it was possible she did not develop it any further. That was at a time when she was practising occultism with Théon in Algiers. Materialisation is possible but it does not happen easily—it demands a very rare and difficult concentration of forces or else an occult process with vital beings behind it such as materialises objects, like the stones that were daily thrown in the Guest House, when we were there. In neither case it is a miracle. But to do as you suggest, make it a common or everyday phenomenon, would be hardly practicable and spiritually not useful, as it is not a spiritual force which gives the power but an occult mental-vital force. It would turn the Yoga into a display of occultism, rather than a process of spiritual change.

20-10-1935

The Mother's Going to Other Planets

Q: I have been wondering whether the Mother has been able to establish a direct connection with Mars or any other far off planet which is probably habitable and inhabited.

A: A long time ago Mother was going everywhere in the subtle body but she found it of a very secondary interest. Our attention must be fixed on the earth because our work is here. Besides, the earth is a concentration of all the other worlds and one can touch them by touching something corresponding in the earth-atmosphere.

13-1-1934

The Mother's Seeing of Narad

I am afraid I don't know much about Narad. Mother once saw him standing between the Overmind and Supermind where they join as if that was his highest station. But he has his action on the lower plane also—only I don't quite know what it is. In the Puranic tales pure love and bhakti on the one hand and, on the other hand, a pleasure in making human beings quarrel seem to be his salient characteristics.

5-5-1935

Feeling of Shock in Exteriorisation

A feeling like that of the shock and the stopping of the breath for a second and as if of falling

down comes to many when the consciousness for a moment or a longer time exteriorises itself (goes up out of the body); the shock comes from the going up of the consciousness or from the return into the body. The Mother used to have that hundreds of times. It is not anything physical (the Doctor, as you say, found nothing). When this movement of the consciousness is more normal, the feeling will probably disappear.

1-10-1935

Meeting the Dead

When Mother said that it was not good to try to meet the dead, she was speaking from a spiritual standpoint which is not usually known or regarded by the spiritists.

25-8-1936

The Mother's Speaking of Past Births

The Mother only speaks to people about their past births when she sees definitely some scene or

memory of their past in concentration, but this happens rarely nowadays.

30-6-1933

Offering the Food to the Divine

Q: What does Mother mean by the sentence in the "Words of the Mother": "When you eat, you must feel that it is the Divine who is eating through you."?

A: It means an offering of the food not to the ego or desire but to the Divine, who is behind all action.

11-1-1935

Harmful Effect of Wrong Food

Mother meant that wrong food and the poisons created by wrong assimilation were a great obstacle to the prolongation of life.

14-1-1935

Identification from the Photo

What you wanted to know was about X being here or not or being one of those in contact with the

Mother. For that the photo was necessary as it is by the appearance, not the name, that Mother identifies those who come here to her—as she did from the photo of X.

26-1-1934

*Identification with the Mother's Consciousness
through Reading Her Books*

Q: When I read the Mother's "Prayers" and "Conversations" I feel as if I come in contact with her consciousness. This makes me think whether it is possible by reading her books to make one's consciousness so intense as to identify it with hers and as a result to elevate the vital and other parts also.

A: It is possible to intensely identify oneself with the Mother's consciousness through what you read—in that case the result you speak of could come. It could also have an effect on the vital up to a certain point.

21-8-1935

Knowledge of French and Closeness to the Mother

Q: Is it right to say that those who know French will be able to serve the Mother better in the years to come?

A: It is mostly that it brings a certain closeness to one side of the Mother.

3-5-1945

The Mother's Music

(1)

The Mother's music has often been recognised by X as Indian of this or that *rāga*. The Mother plays whatever comes through her—she does not usually play any precisely composed music whether European or Indian—the latter in fact she has never learned.

11-9-1934

(2)

The Mother has played music from her childhood upwards—so it is no trouble to her to sing or play several times.

15-9-1933

(3)

It is not necessary to have technical knowledge in order to feel what is behind the music. Mother,

of course, does not play for the sake of a technical musical effect, but to bring down something from the higher planes and that anyone can receive who is open.

15-9-1933

(4)

Q: Is it true that when the Mother plays on the organ she calls down the Gods of the higher planes to help us?

A: Not consciously.

9-2-1934

(5)

Q: Does it mean that the Gods are attracted to her music and come down?

A: They may be.

10-2-1934

(6)

Q: Does the Mother bring out something while playing?

A: If she did not bring something, why should she play at all?

19-4-1934

SOME EARLY LETTERS¹

I need some place of refuge in which I can complete my Yoga unassailed and build up other souls around me. It seems to me that Pondicherry is the place appointed by those who are Beyond, but you know how much effort is needed to establish the thing that is purposed upon the material plane...

I am developing the necessary powers for bringing down the spiritual on the material plane, and I am now able to put myself into men and change them, removing the darkness and bringing light, giving them a new heart and a new mind. This I can do with great swiftness and completeness with those who are near me, but I have also succeeded with men hundreds of miles away. I have also been given the power to read men's characters and hearts, even their thoughts, but this power is not yet absolutely complete, nor can I use it always and in all cases. The power of guiding action by

¹ These letters, except the first two, were written to the Mother by Sri Aurobindo.

the mere exercise of will is also developing, but it is not so powerful as yet as the other. My communication with the other world is yet of a troubled character, though I am certainly in communication with some very great powers. But of all these things I will write more when the final obstacles in my way are cleared from the path.

What I perceive most clearly, is that the principal object of my Yoga is to remove absolutely and entirely every possible source of error and ineffectiveness, of error in order that the Truth I shall eventually show to men may be perfect, and of ineffectiveness in order that the work of changing the world, so far as I have to assist it, may be entirely victorious and irresistible. It is for this reason that I have been going through so long a discipline and that the more brilliant and mighty results of Yoga have been so long withheld. I have been kept busy laying down the foundation, a work severe and painful. It is only now that the edifice is beginning to rise upon the sure and perfect foundation that has been laid.

12-7-1911

*
**

My Yoga is proceeding with great rapidity, but I defer writing to you of the results until certain

experiments in which I am now engaged, have yielded fruit sufficient to establish beyond dispute the theory and system of Yoga which I have formed and which is giving great results not only to me, but to the young men who are with me.... I expect these results within a month, if all goes well.

20-9-1911

*
**

All is always for the best, but it is sometimes from the external point of view an awkward best...

The whole earth is now under one law and answers to the same vibrations and I am sceptical of finding any place where the clash of the struggle will not pursue us. In any case, an effective retirement does not seem to be my destiny. I must remain in touch with the world until I have either mastered adverse circumstances or succumbed or carried on the struggle between the spiritual and physical so far as I am destined to carry it on. This is how I have always seen things and still see them. As for failure, difficulty and apparent impossibility I am too much habituated to them to be much impressed by their constant self-presentation except for passing moments...

One needs to have a calm heart, a settled will, entire self-abnegation and the eyes constantly fixed

on the beyond to live undiscouraged in times like these which are truly a period of universal decomposition. For myself, I follow the Voice and look neither to right nor to left of me. The result is not mine and hardly at all now even the labour.

6-5-1915

*
**

Heaven we have possessed, but not the earth; but the fullness of the Yoga is to make, in the formula of the Veda, "Heaven and Earth equal and one".

20-5-1915

■
**

Everything internal is ripe or ripening, but there is a sort of locked struggle in which neither side can make a very appreciable advance (somewhat like the trench warfare in Europe), the spiritual force insisting against the resistance of the physical world, that resistance disputing every inch and making more or less effective counter-attacksAnd if there were not the strength and Ananda within, it would be harassing and disgusting work; but the eye of knowledge looks beyond and sees that it is only a protracted episode.

28-7-1915

■
**

Nothing seems able to disturb the immobility of things and all that is active outside our own selves is a sort of welter of dark and sombre confusion from which nothing formed or luminous can emerge. It is a singular condition of the world, the very definition of chaos with the superficial form of the old world resting apparently intact on the surface. But a chaos of long disintegration or of some early new birth? It is the thing that is being fought out from day to day, but as yet without any approach to a decision.

16-9-1915

*
**

The experience you have described is Vedic in the real sense, though not one which would easily be recognised by the modern systems of Yoga which call themselves Yogic. It is the union of the "Earth" of the Veda and Purana with the divine Principle, an earth which is said to be above our earth, that is to say, the physical being and consciousness of which the world and the body are only images. But the modern Yogas hardly recognise the possibility of a material union with the Divine.

31-12-1915

(The experience referred to in the above letter is described in "Prayers and Meditations of the Mother". It is reproduced below, both in the original French and the English translation, for reference:

Le 26 Novembre 1915

La conscience tout entière étant immergée dans la contemplation divine, l'être intégral jouissait d'une suprême et vaste félicité.

Puis le corps physique fut saisi, d'abord dans ses membres inférieurs, ensuite dans sa totalité, par un tremblement sacré qui fit tomber peu à peu, même dans la sensation la plus matérielle, toutes limites personnelles. L'être s'agrandit progressivement, méthodiquement, rompant toute barrière, brisant tout obstacle pour contenir et manifester une Force, une Puissance croissant sans cesse en immensité et en intensité; c'était comme une dilatation progressive des cellules jusqu'à la complète identification avec la terre: le corps de la conscience éveillée était le globe terrestre se mouvant harmonieusement dans l'espace éthéré. Et la conscience savait que son corps globaire se mouvait ainsi dans les bras de la Personnalité universelle et elle se donnait, s'abandonnait à Elle dans une extase de paisible félicité. Alors la conscience sentit

que son corps était absorbé dans le corps de l'univers et ne faisait plus qu'un avec lui et la conscience devint la conscience de l'univers, immobile en sa totalité, mouvant infiniment en sa complexité interne. La conscience de l'univers s'élança vers le Divin dans une ardente aspiration et une soumission parfaite et elle vit, dans la splendeur de la Lumière Immaculée, l'Etre resplendissant debout sur un serpent à multiples têtes dont le corps s'enroulait infiniment autour de l'univers. Et l'Etre dans un geste éternel de triomphe maîtrisait et créait à la fois le serpent et l'univers issu de lui: dressé sur le serpent, il le dominait de toute sa puissance victorieuse, et le même geste qui foudroyait l'hydre enveloppant l'univers le faisait naître éternellement. Alors la conscience, devenue cet Etre, perçut que sa forme changeait encore une fois, absorbée dans quelque chose qui n'était plus une forme et qui contenait toutes les formes, quelque chose qui, immuable, voit, l'Oeil, le Témoin. Et ce que Cela voit, est. Puis le dernier vestige de forme disparut et la conscience elle-même fut absorbée dans l'Inexprimable, l'Indicible.

Le retour vers la conscience du corps individuel se fit très lentement dans une constante et invariable splendeur de Lumière, de Puissance, de Félicité et d'Adoration, par gradations successives,

mais directement, c'est-à-dire sans passer de nouveau par les formes universelle et terrestre. Et ce fut comme si la modeste forme corporelle était devenue le revêtement direct et immédiat—sans intermédiaire—de l'Eternel et Suprême Témoin.

November 26, 1915

The entire consciousness immersed in divine contemplation, the whole being enjoyed a supreme and vast felicity.

Then was the physical body seized, first in its lower members and next the whole of it, by a sacred trembling which made little by little even in the most material sensation all personal limits fall away. The being progressively, methodically, grew in greatness, breaking down every barrier, shattering every obstacle, that it might contain and manifest a force and a power which increased ceaselessly in immensity and intensity. It was as if a progressive dilatation of the cells until there was a complete identification with the earth: the body of the awakened consciousness was the terrestrial globe moving harmoniously in ethereal space. And the consciousness knew that its global body was thus moving in the arms of the universal Personality, and it gave itself, it abandoned itself

to Her in an ecstasy of peaceful bliss. Then it felt that its body was absorbed in the body of the universe and one with it; the consciousness became the consciousness of the universe, in its totality immobile, in its internal complexity moving infinitely. The consciousness of the universe sprang towards the Divine in an ardent aspiration, a perfect surrender, and it saw in the splendour of the immaculate Light the radiant Being standing on a many-headed serpent whose body coiled infinitely around the universe. The Being in an eternal gesture of triumph mastered and created at one and the same time the serpent and the universe that issued from it; erect on the serpent he dominated it with all his victorious might, and the same gesture that crushed the hydra, enveloping the universe, gave it eternal birth. Then the consciousness became this Being and perceived that its form was changing once more; it was absorbed into something which was no longer a form and yet contained all forms, something which, immutable, sees,—the Eye, the Witness. And what It sees, is. Then this last vestige of form disappeared and the consciousness itself was absorbed into the Unutterable, the Ineffable.

The return towards the consciousness of the individual body took place very slowly in a constant

and invariable splendour of Light and Power and Felicity and Adoration, by successive gradations, but directly, without passing again through the universal and terrestrial forms. And it was as if the modest corporeal form had become the direct and immediate vesture, without any intermediary, of the supreme and eternal Witness.)



